# AUSTRALIA:
## THE MAKING OF A NATION

JOHN FOSTER FRASER

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BY

JOHN FOSTER FRASER

Author of "Canada as It Is," "Quaint Subjects of the King," "Life's Contrasts," "The Real Siberia," "America at Work," "Red Russia," "Pictures from the Balkans."

Confident, aggressive, lonely,
Product of the present only,
Thinking nothing of the past.
—*Australian Poet*

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# FOREWORD TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA

THIS is a book about you — the impressions, the investigations, and the conclusions of a world-wanderer who spent a few months in your midst.

For years many of you wrote to me: "You write books about America, Canada, Russia, Siberia, and other lands; why don't you come here and tell the world about us? Tell the truth, and we'll give you a good time when you are here."

It was long before the opportunity came. When it did, you kept your promise. You gave me a good time. I have told the people of Britain about your hospitality. It never faltered from the moment the first bunch of greeting telegrams was pushed into my hand on reaching your shores, till, in the droop of the day, I watched the flutter of handkerchiefs as my boat steamed homewards. There were the official receptions from Premiers and Lord Mayors, the dinner parties and the luncheon parties, the kind things said, the willingness of men whom I had never seen, and am never likely to see again, to throw private concerns aside in order to show me phases of life in which I was interested; the visits to farms, the pleasant meals, with the good-wife waiting on her guests, the talks with all sorts and conditions of

men—all back in my life now, happening thousands of miles away, but, as I write in the quietude of my London home, bright and fragrant in memory.

Many of you put the question, "Are you going to write a book about Australia?" and I always told you I did not know. I did not. I had seen other countries—oh, a great many other countries: new lands, old lands, had studied life and the state of labour in them, and I found myself looking at you sometimes as a people apart, sometimes as people working out problems other people had wrestled with; sometimes, and this more frequently, I looked at you with eyes that quivered with the haze of comparison. Somebody once wrote something nasty about comparisons. Yet it is only by comparisons that we arrive at safe judgments about men or about countries.

Thus I came to admire much in Australia. But now and then I knocked against something which jarred, which hurt. Then, thought I, "No, I will not write a book. Why should I criticise? How ungracious even to hint all might not be well." I said this to myself because I liked you, and I did not want any of you to murmur as you turned pages I had written, "He might have left that unsaid."

What, for a long time, kept hand from pen was a recognition of your "touchiness." Do you know that many of you would talk to me by the hour about what a horrible place England was to live in, and when I hinted that there might be some respects in which England was a better land than Australia you stuck up your feathers and intimated I was just one more of those muddy-brained Britons

who got personal satisfaction in sneering at Australia and the Australians? And you have done that in regard to all your author visitors, from Froude down to Fraser. Deary me! That was the kind of attitude which made me laugh and occasionally made me sad. And now and then the temptation came to me to say, "If you are pained by the casual chatter of the globe-trotter who visits Australia for a couple of days and fails to be enthusiastic, what justification have you to be contemptuous about Britain, which the majority of you have never seen?"

I have knocked enough about the world to know there are other good lands besides England. And believe me it would not be a bad thing if Australians —especially Australians who have not been outside their own continent—could come to believe that there is just a possibility that other people are also wide-awake, and that it is not beyond the range of language for a visitor to say a nice thing about another land without the slightest intention of casting a slur upon Australia.

It was fine, however, to notice the way you stood up for yourselves—not boastfully or braggingly, but just standing up. It was like a tonic to hear most of you sing the praises of Australia. I like to see a young fellow glow with passionate love for his mother: the dearest, sweetest, most beautiful woman on earth. It does not prove that she is; but it makes the blood gush warm with admiration that he should think so. So I loved to hear the Australian talk about Australia.

You know what "having a chip on the shoulder"

means? Well, may I suggest in kindliness, get yours off. Do not be looking for offence where no offence is meant. I was interviewed in a certain town—indeed, I was interviewed in most towns, but I am thinking of a particular town—and I talked about the amazing development of Australia, all the more wonderful to me when I remembered the class from which the men who had done most of this were drawn. In my mind's eye were those brave men, discontented with their lot in the old country, not University men, but men with big hearts and stout sinews, who had battled in the new country and gained victory. Yet I was abused in the Australian press as an offensive British bounder who was insulting the Australian people! I made inquiry. What was it? Convicts! I laughed. Then I used bad language at the thought that there were actually people in Australia who turned words into insult when a compliment was paid. And, believe me, I came across that particular "chip" more than once. Get rid of it. It is unworthy. Besides, if it will afford any satisfaction, let me say that I had two of my Scottish forbears hanged by the neck at Carlisle, a century and a half ago, for cattle lifting.

It would be contrary to human nature if many an Australian, on reading some of my impressions in the following pages, did not exclaim, perhaps mildly, perhaps otherwise, "The author is wrong." And, my dear Australian, if I were sitting opposite you it is not unlikely you would be able, with much show of reason, to demonstrate that, as your opinion

differs from mine, you are much more likely to be right, because you have lived in Australia all your life and I was but a scampering visitor for a few months.

I have been in precisely the same box. I know Britain well; I have lived most of my life in it. But every now and then I read a book or a newspaper article written by an outsider, an American, sometimes an Australian, and I have caught myself crying out, "Heavens, the fellow is ignorant or grossly prejudiced." Sometimes I have resented the criticism passed upon the British people. Occasionally, however, I have known the writers, competent men, widely travelled, keen students of humanity, able to form stable judgments, and neither ignorant nor prejudiced. So, instead of flying into a tantrum, I have tried to appreciate that the writer, though his acquaintance with England may be short, has brought a new vision to bear upon us, that he has a quick eye and a shrewd brain, and he has seen things which impressed him, but which I have not noticed because I have seen them so often that my sight and conscience have become blunted. Hence the shout "That is an exaggeration!" which escapes from the lips when some sentence cuts into the raw of my Britishism like the lash of a well-directed whip. Thus I come to recognise, quietly and philosophically, I trust, that the people of my own land do not necessarily possess all the virtues, and that we do not suffer when a visitor directs a glance to our faults, towards which, naturally, we have been a little blind. And what I give to others I am prone to

ask—a recognition that one may criticise and yet appreciate, that a condemnation of one thing should not be nursed as a grievance to the forgetting of admiration bestowed upon a hundred things.

What? A "letting down," an "apology" for what is to follow! Not at all. It is just a plea to the Australians, who need to mark the point as much as any people, that they should keep the balance and think that a British writer, who has been in Australia for a short time, may know more about Australia than some Australian writers, who have never been at all to Great Britain, know about Great Britain. I did not fail to notice that the Australian who most bitterly resented criticism of his land was always the first in criticism of other lands.

Nothing would be easier, nay pleasanter, than to go through the piles of printed and written material with which I am surrounded, and on which might be stamped "Advertise Australia," and proceed to write glowing paraphrases of official pamphlets. I have no desire to win your adulation by turning on the hose of gush. It would be a poor compliment to the intelligent masses in your country if I did that. As for the others, I am unconcerned. Much more good will be done—at least you must allow me to hold that opinion—by regarding Australia with a loving eye, for I came to love your country, and write frankly, sincerely, and with no axe to grind, exactly what a man, who has studied men and things in many other parts of the earth, thinks about the mighty continent of the southern hemisphere. The only

country that need be afraid of honest criticism is the country which has things to hide.

You have the right to walk straight-shouldered and to hold your heads high. Your fate is not in the lap of the gods; it rests on your illimitable prairies and on the two thousand million acres of Commonwealth lands still available for occupation. Not you, nor any of us, shall live to see the time when the breasts of all those prairies will yield food to wide-scattered mankind. But we are seeing the beginnings of a mighty settlement. The crowded parts of the world are beginning to turn their eyes to your southern land. Are you going to welcome them? They have been tardy in coming. Perhaps this is because they have been misinformed. If so, ask from where they got their information?

A year or so ago there was a Franco-British Exhibition in London. Australia made a brave and interesting display at that great Fair. Yet the visitor smiled. Here is an account written by a good Australian of what took place: "A farmer goes into the Australian Court for information, and he is immediately struck by the different information he gets. He calls at the New South Wales Court, and receives pamphlets, and is told that that is the country for him. He goes on to Victoria, and hears that New South Wales is subject to drought, and that he had better go to Victoria. He then drops into New Zealand, and is told that that is 'God's own country.' He winds up with Queensland, and tells the man in charge what he has heard. That individual laughs at him, and says, 'Look here, read these cuttings

# AUSTRALIA

## THE MAKING OF A NATION

### CHAPTER I

#### SOME GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

"Australia! land of lonely lake
And serpent-haunted fen;
Land of the torrent and the fire
And forest-sundered men:
Thou art not now as thou shalt be
When the stern invaders come,
In the hush before the hurricane,
The dread before the drum."

JAMES LISTER CUTHBERTSON.

ADELAIDE for culture, Melbourne for business, Sydney for having a good time. That is as quick a summary as I can provide in one breath of how three big towns of Australia first struck me. Then with investigation came qualification and amplification. There was more business in Sydney than Melbourne. There was more culture in both than in Adelaide. Yet how a town first impresses one is not without interest.

And illusion went as a wave clears a deck of rubbish.

I went out to the "land of drought," where, by repute, the country gasped for water, the hills were wide wastes of ochreish soil, where cattle pined and sheep died by the million, all because there was no blade of grass to feed them and no pools at which to soften their parched tongues.

When I reached Adelaide it was raining, and it had rained for weeks. The train communication with Melbourne was interrupted, for the floods had destroyed the bridges. Instead of sheep dying for lack of water, I heard of thousands being drowned. Later, when I went to Melbourne, it rained—dull, miserable rain. At Sydney it rained, but there were occasional days of sunshine. That was in August and September—"our winter," explained the Australian.

"This rain," observed the native, "must make you feel quite at home"—for the good fellow clung to the belief, as he clings to the cardinal tenet in his religion, that it is always raining in England. The only thing was to wait until there was a fragrant and sunshiny day, and for the man from the "Old Country" to remark: "Ah, this is lovely, and reminds me of a typical English summer day." A glint in the eye of the Australian advertised that he was not sure whether I was leg-pulling or lying.

In England we talk about our hours of sunshine. In Australia they talk about their inches of rain. As sunshine is necessary to us, so rain is necessary to them. And though bridges crashed before the floods, though sheep were drowned, though I saw vast miles of country under water, though roads were

impassable because of the rains, the general heart of Australia was glad.

Rain was a blessing. The land was in a rapture of fecundity. The plains were carpeted with green. The sheep-feed was good, and the price of wool was bumping. There had never been such prospects. The lean, droughty, dying, bankrupt years were forgotten. I went to Australia in the year of much happiness—1909—because of the plentitude of rain.

So I took out big maps of Australia, and read the words "desert" and "terra incognita" over great slabs of the continent. Men told me of life in those regions. Some talked of the horrors, the loneliness, the God-forsaken regions of the backlands. Other men said "desert" was a lie—that there was land to sustain millions of people.

Both spoke the truth. Before the rains the interior is arid. If you have a stray patch of grass, its neighbour patch is hundreds of miles away. For five years the interior may pant, cursed with drought. Then the rains come. In a few days prairies of grass reach to the belly of your horse. That is one of the wonders of the land.

Australia, which is so vast that you could drop the British Isles upon it and not find them again for years ; which is as big, or bigger, than all Europe, has an insignificant population of a little over four million inhabitants. In the big towns, like Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, you will find a third of the population—strangely lop-sided compared with the number who live on the land. In no other country

in the world, dependent upon agriculture for its wealth, is the disproportion so marked. Melbourne, the capital of Victoria, is moving toward holding half the population of the State, and Sydney is doing the same. In some parts there is a movement for the population to decrease in the agricultural districts. Strange that in a country where 93½ per cent. of the soil is still untouched by farming one should come across a drift toward the towns!

If you go into the "back-blocks," where the battle for life is fiercest, you will learn that many of the fighters are new-comers—"new chums," as they are called. I was told that by the third generation the Australian has got sick of the fight. Life in the bush is all right for story books. But it is better to be one of the mouchers round Sydney than living on gum trees "away back."

Now, there are things you note quickly in the big towns. You will have been warned, as I was warned, against the swaggering, "blowing" propensities of the people. That may have been a characteristic of the past. It does not exist to-day. True, there is the ignorant and blatant creature in Australia, as there is in all countries; but beyond an open and legitimate pride in what has been accomplished in little more than half a century, and a rosy optimism concerning Australia's future—"when we get the people"—I found little of the puffing national megalomania which distinguishes some other lands.

Whilst the Australian is proud of his British stock—and though he has never seen Britain and

has forgotten from where his ancestors came, he calls England "home"—he has an idea he is not so sluggish as John Bull, and rather preens himself on having the briskness of the American.

During my stay in Australia I must have been asked a thousand times whether I did not think the Australian approximated in character to the American type. I never failed to notice a certain disappointment when I said "No." The laying-out of some of the towns, the straight streets, the blocks of offices, are more American than English. But the people themselves are, up to the present, just transplanted British people. If by a magician's wand I had been wafted from England to Australia, to Sydney or Melbourne, and been asked at the end of a week where I was, I would have answered: "Some well-managed English provincial city that I seem to have missed."

You find neither the fashion nor the culture that London shows, but you come across a clearer intellectual life, a higher plane of social well-being than you see in any towns of similar size in Great Britain. Take Adelaide, the Philadelphia of Australia, about the drowsiness of which the other cities like to make jokes. It has a population under 200,000. I know of no similar-sized town at home where anything approaching the same kind of stimulating life prevails: colleges, museums, art galleries, botanical and zoological gardens, an extensive public library, a geographical society, and, in social circles, a refinement and a culture which were a little astonishing to me, who had allowed

myself to accept the popular idea that Australians were of the crude backwoodsman type.

And what applies to Adelaide applies also, though in a variable degree, to Melbourne and Sydney. Melbourne is a business town. Yet, as I have indicated, more business is done in Sydney, with its blocks of substantial business premises suggestive of the solid wealth of Liverpool. The Sydney man, however, lives in a softer, warmer, easier climate than Melbourne possesses, and some of the clime has got into his bones.

No place stocked with folk of British race is more easy-going than Sydney. I doubt if there is any city in the world more exquisitely situated. The beauty of the harbour—great deep-water fingers of the sea, stretching miles up between wooded banks—is captivating. My ears had tingled so much with praise of Sydney Harbour that I was prepared to be disappointed. The loveliness of the situation, however, was all that words had painted it. Mighty ocean-scouring vessels lay alongside the wharves abutting on the town. A fine park cuddled the waterside. Villa residences dotted the brae-sides on the hills across the bay. Quick-moving and cheap ferry-boats slid from landing-stage to landing-stage.

One night I dined with a friend in North Sydney. After dinner we went on the balcony. There lay Sydney—a heap of glittering points of light. The shore fronts were punctuated with electric bulbs. The radiant ferry-boats, throwing deep reflections, glided, like giant fireflies, over

the water. The scene was more fascinating than Venice at night when approached from the Lido.

The climate, with soft rains in the winter and semi-tropical sultriness in the Australian summer—December, January and February—produces an amiability which makes the Sydney folk as pleasantly contented a community as can be found.

And yet—this struck me as curious—they are not a joyous-looking people. You may have heard of the Australian frown—a puckering of the face, due to the sun glare. Nor in the streets do you mark any blitheness and gaiety of demeanour—no merry, girlish laughter. On a Sunday afternoon the domain breasting the harbour is thronged with people, neatly dressed, decorous, admiring the scene—but solemn. There is no spray of light chatter such as distinguishes the promenaders in London Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon.

Another thing is the physique of the people; and these remarks apply to Melbourne as much as they do to Sydney. The countryman is long, lean, wiry; but the average city man and city woman—quite different from the people in the United States—are rather slim in physique and are not over the medium height.

Then, the courtesy of everybody. Those who have knocked about the world know something of the brusqueness, nearing rudeness, of some democratic communities—rather a straining to make you understand that they are quite as good as you. Politically and socially, there are no more demo-

cratic people than the Australians. But there is no noisy self-assertiveness. The quiet, dignified courtesy, genuine and not conventional, was delightful to receive.

Now, all this sent me to probe beneath the surface. Here was a people drawn from sturdy British stock, brought from regions where the climate is often severe, and planted in a land where the atmosphere is that of Italy, and where—despite the droughts, which wither prosperity out of the land—life has few hardships; nay, where life is as gentle as in any place on the face of the earth. What their forefathers, the breed of daring men who first settled the land, have done is patent to all eyes. But, with immigration—the flow of fresh blood into the land—sluggish, what will be the characteristics of the third and subsequent generations?

The warm climate, the pleasant conditions of life, are already removing that doggedness which was the hall-mark of the brave men who first adventured in Australia. Among native-born Australians there is a growing dislike towards bush life. There is a hunger for the towns and the pleasures which town life brings. We have that at home. But, of people of British origin, the Australians are the most pleasure-loving I have come across. They are honest pleasures: boating, picnicking, cricket, football, theatre-going. But what effect is this having on the development of the nation? There one pauses.

It would be silly to criticise a people because they are contented. Content, however, is not

sufficient, especially when there is a mighty continent lying asleep and needing to be awakened into agricultural well-doing. There is little or no striving after immense fortunes, which is the keynote of American success. At the risk of overstating the case, I may say there is a singular absence of commercial ambition in Australia. "Oh, that is good enough," is a phrase I heard too often. This was not from the lips of the older men, who have done so much, and valiantly, to lift Australia where it is, but chiefly from the lips of the newer generation, who have inherited the good things provided for them. The British youth does not win much praise by reason of his industry or his desire for knowing and equipping himself for the battle of industrial and commercial strife. But there is more vim in him than in the Australian young man.

So a significant point is reached in the history of Australia. Men from Britain and those of immediate British descent have accomplished wonders. Fine towns are Sydney and Melbourne, and imposing is their architecture. But get back from those towns and you strike a human desert.

"Canada has no such big town as Sydney," said an enthusiastic Sydney man to me. "Canada ought to be thankful," was my reply. For an agricultural country like Australia has too few people on the land and too many in the cities.

Charming cities!

But what is to be the future of Australia? Wheat grows, vast herds of cattle are reared, sheep breed amazingly.

The coming of children is slow. The native-born population moves slowly. Children are a nuisance—and they interfere with pleasure. The American cry of "race suicide" is being echoed in Australia.

The country is too far away to attract throngs of the determined needy from Europe. Besides, they have heard of the horrors of drought seasons. And though the shout in Australia is "Population—oh, that we had population!" I missed any general genuine desire for immigrants. "We are happy; life is good; why should we make things harder for ourselves by letting others come in and share the good things?" That is the thought which I could discern at the back of the minds of many Australians.

Yes, a pleasant country, that southern rim of the continent. A good-natured and most hospitable people. A languorous climate, with the danger of consequent slackness of energy.

A beautiful land. I loved it. I loved the people.

But always, after they had been entertaining me, after I had been on motor tours, after a yachting trip to Sydney Harbour, I kept saying to myself: "It is delightful—but what are the Australians intent upon doing to make Australia the great country they all say it will be, some time?"

## CHAPTER II

### THE IMPERIAL AND NATIONAL SPIRIT

"She is not yet; but he whose ear
Thrills to that finer atmosphere
Where footfalls of appointed things,
Reverberant of days to be,
Are heard in forecast echoings,
Like wave-beats from a viewless sea—
Hears in the voiceful tremors of the sky
Auroral heralds whispering, 'She is nigh.'"

JAMES BRUNTON STEPHENS.

AUSTRALIA presents a paradox. There is a breezy, buoyant Imperial spirit. But the national spirit, as it is understood elsewhere, is practically non-existent—though one sees the green leaf sprouting.

This seems strange. Yet the explanation is simple enough. The population in all the States has been drawn from one common source: the British Isles. There is a warm and generous love for the Motherland. When the Australian uses the word "home," he does not mean his home. He means England.

And that one word "home," more than arguments about the advantages of Imperial trade or demonstrations in favour of Imperial cohesion, has soaked into the brain of the Australian, and he appreciates—not always by reasoning about it, but with the regard a son has for his father—that

"home" is his country just as much as is Australia, and that what affects the Englishman affects him. Hence the growing spirit of Imperialism throughout the continent.

But you drop from Imperialism to something like parochialism in Australia, with little of the real national spirit intervening—though it exists and must increase. Here is the reason. The old settlements were made on the seaboard long before the coming of railways. For all practical purposes, the States might have been so many islands. The only communication was by sea. Indeed, to-day there is no railway communication between Western Australia and the eastern States. It takes almost as long to go from Fremantle to Adelaide as it does from Liverpool to New York. Western Australia is part of the continent, but as there is no railway communication, it is just as much severed from the rest of the continent as though an ocean flowed between.

Now this was very much the state of things in old days between New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. Though of common stock, each State was an absolutely independent community. Each State was fired with ambition to make itself the most favoured land. The people had their independent Parliaments; separate Governors were sent out by the Crown. The States passed their own laws with no more consideration for each other than British legislation displays for uniformity with French legislation.

The old spirit of State rivalry, amounting almost

to enmity, is waning—and must be destroyed by the machinery of Federal government—but it is, however, sufficiently pronounced to-day to rouse the scorn of all sensible men. The humour of the situation is that every man you meet in Sydney or Melbourne will agree with you on the general principle. "Yes," says the Sydney man, "you are quite right; but I am sure you do not find the jealousy in Sydney to anything like the same extent you do in Melbourne." "Of course," says the Melbourne man, "this parochial feeling to which you refer would soon disappear if it were not for the absurd jealousy of Sydney over Melbourne's prosperity." Each State is able to provide for the patient, listening visitor, like myself, convincing statistics that in regard to one point or other that State is more prosperous per head of the population than the neighbour State or any part of the globe's surface.

In my journeys I heard too much talk about State advancement and too little about Australia's advancement. Here was a marked difference from what I had noticed in Canada. There a man is proud of Ontario or British Columbia or Manitoba; but first, last, and all the time he is a Canadian. To say there is absolutely no Australian national sentiment would be an injustice to plenty of representative men. The ordinary Australian, if the question were put to him, would insist that there is a national sentiment, and very likely be indignant with myself for suggesting that it is small. He would point to the defence movement: compulsory training and the establishment of a local navy.

Talk to such a man, and, although he will begin with phrases about what a very magnificent country Australia is, it is only a few minutes before he is enthusiastic about his own State and is making disparaging comments upon the other States. When a young farmer leaves Ontario and goes west to the wheat stretch beyond Winnipeg, there is delight that he has gone to another part of Canada to make it fruitful. When young farmers move from Victoria to Queensland, there are wailing regrets in Victoria, as though they had emigrated to a foreign land.

Australia has now a Federal Parliament—and great good to the nation must come as a consequence. But the State Legislatures still continue, controlling the land and the railways, for instance. As a matter of fact, there has grown up a fear in the States that Federal Government will decrease their importance, that they may be called upon to contribute money one of these days for great public services, not to the benefit of Australia—few will consider that proud aspect—but for the benefit of some other State. It is just as though the taxpayers of Birmingham objected to pay for naval defence on the ground that they could not be subjected to naval attack.

The capital of each State is the meeting-place of the State Legislature. But where is the Federal Legislature to take up its permanent habitation? At present it is in temporary assemblage at Melbourne. For it to remain there would put Sydney into hysterics of indignation, and for it to be

removed to Sydney would almost provoke a civil war in Victoria. To satisfy all parties it was arranged in the original Constitution to build a Capitol removed from either of these towns. It will, very likely, be at a spot called Yass, in New South Wales. But to prevent heart-burning among the other States, a piece of territory has been ceded, and it has been disinfected, as it were, from New South Wales by being made an independent spot—like Washington.

Yass, as a town, is little more than a name. It is an extremely picturesque spot. But it is not on the road to anything, except scenery. That in coming, though distant, times a beautiful and worthy Capitol will be at Yass I doubt not, should it be finally decided to erect the Capitol there. But that this generation or the next generation will see it is well-nigh impossible. Who is going to live at Yass? Permanent officials and politicians—the latter only during the parliamentary session. The society of politicians is not sufficient to attract the retired and leisured classes. There will be no diplomatic circle, as at Washington, to be the nucleus of a cultured community. It is hard to conceive that society people in Melbourne, and Sydney, and Adelaide, and Brisbane—with all the pleasures those cities can afford—will go and dump themselves in a ragged, raw, unfinished place as Yass is sure to be for many years. The one good thing about it is that the creation of Yass will break down local jealousies and help in the development of a national spirit.

Also, the growing Imperial sentiment will operate in the same direction. During recent years —dating from the South African War, and then accentuated by the victory of the Japanese over the Russians—there has been a growing recognition of the fact that Australia cannot stand in "splendid isolation," that her life depends on the maintenance of the British Empire. Not so long ago this idea was absent from the public mind—even now it is possible to touch a stratum of opinion that Australia should keep outside the range of international complications.

To the mass of people, Europe presents a picture of an armed camp—and that makes them shudder. The conquest of Australia was a peaceful annexation. The Australians have never had to fight for their national existence, and they have never had the terrors of war on their borders. In the main they have been a prosperous people, living in a part of the world far removed from the storm centres of racial difference. Things have gone so easily with them that the prospect of invasion never entered their minds; whilst to a considerable section of the people the money paid for the upkeep of the British Navy was just so much cash thrown into the sea.

I am not going to say I did not come across people who jibbed at the idea of Australia being under Britain—the word "Colony" is offensive to them—and who talked about independence. I came across men of influential position who argued that as the British investor has so much money locked

up in Australia, the British taxpayer should bear all the cost of defence against a possible aggressor. Nay, there are even men who do not care a rap for the British flag, and will tell you they would just as readily live under the German or Japanese flags, which means they do not want to live under Japanese, German or British. These represent small slices of public opinion. But they do indicate what gets into the mind of folk who are such an enormous distance from Europe and who have never had the enemy at their gates. Perhaps the thing which would jerk all these people into a proper appreciation of the situation would be the sudden knowledge that, say for just one month, Australia was free and independent of Britain, and could not expect the guardianship of the British Navy.

Now, the sentiments which I have indicated, though existing, are far less common than they were ten years ago. Most Australians do know it is impossible for them to stand alone. In the dark days of the South African War they found themselves asking the question: "What would our position be if anything happened to Great Britain?" Then the latent love for the Old Country flamed, and splendid service was given by Australia's sons on the veldt of the Transvaal. Next, the growth and the efficiency of the Japanese Navy gave them pause. Japan is hungry for colonies. Mighty tracts of useful land in Australia are still uninhabited. In time of disaster what could Australians—be they never so valorous—do to keep the Japanese out?

And Germany? Australia began to see that it would not be necessary to have sea battles on her coast to affect her fate—that very likely it might be affected by some struggle in the North Sea. And so love for the old land, and the fire of fear in their hearts, gave impetus to Imperialism. I do not think there is much fear now.

The national mind, like the human mind, works curiously. Accordingly, you find in Australia to-day a belief that Australia's State and national autonomous Governments are dependent on Australia being an integral part of the British Empire. There is a warm pride in forming part of the Empire. Loyal demonstrations are most marked. At private luncheon and dinner parties the toast of "The King" is given. Semi-public gatherings rarely disperse without singing the National Anthem. There is more evidence of loyalty in Australia than I have ever met with in any other part of the King's dominions—not even excepting home. But it is loyalty to the Empire, not to Great Britain.

This is having a remarkable effect on the people. It will go a long way to smother the silly inter-State jealousies. It is making the people realise their position and admit the responsibilities of their manhood. Not out of State patriotism, but out of Imperialism a healthy nationalism will grow. And when the national tree blossoms, the crop of good will be enormous. For one of the things that has hampered Australia's progress has been the absence of the national ideal.

Australia, without any demurs that are now worth noticing, is bent on having an Australian fleet, built as far as possible in Australia, and manned by Australians. Critics point to how little Australia is doing after all. That, at the present moment, is not the point. The thing is that Australians, instead of developing the feeling of independence, grasp the principle of inter-dependence amongst all the Britains. Members of the Labour Party have not shown any marked objection to an Australian fleet, though there was some boggling at it being under the jurisdiction of the British Admiralty. This was representative of the public thought not so many months ago. But the persuasive eloquence of Mr. Deakin, the late Prime Minister, brought the multitude into line to accept the arrangement that, whilst the Australian fleet will serve in Australian waters in time of peace, it shall pass under the control of the Imperial naval authorities in times of Imperial emergency.

Further, there is the belief that all young Australians should learn how to shoulder and fire a rifle. A scheme of compulsory military training was long shuttlecocked. But it has been taken up in earnest by the Government, and in conversation with all sorts of men I rarely heard anything but the heartiest approval of the project. Whilst, therefore, a strong State sentiment exists and a great Imperial sentiment is saturating the hearts of the Australians, the very thing which might be expected to militate against a national sentiment is really levering it into existence. From Australia's recog-

nition of the place she holds in the Empire, and the obligations which that recognition brings, there must flourish the national sentiment, with the consequent desire for the advancement of national interests—as distinct from State interests—to the material profit of the Commonwealth as a whole.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEM OF IMMIGRATION

"Thus do I stand—
Duty and Friendship on either hand.
Duty cries 'Go,' while Friendship whispers 'Stay';
But Duty's is the voice I must obey."

GARNET WALCH.

AUSTRALIA is the land of problems.

The largest of all these is the peopling of the continent. In a broad generality, there is no place on the world's surface capable of yielding so much for the benefit of the race, and where so little is being done. It is a stale commonplace that Australia needs immigrants. It is a puzzle how she is going to get them. It is a fact that a good many Australians are antagonistic to the coming of fresh settlers.

Now, it has been abundantly shown that the continent is capable of carrying a mighty duplication of the present population, which at present is only four persons to every three square miles. Even by a restrained calculation, I conclude that Australia is able to support at least 200,000,000 people.

Something is being done to attract suitable colonists. Paragraphs which occasionally appear in English newspapers about the arrival of one or

two hundred "new chums" produce in the mind of the casual reader the impression that there is an encouraging flow of human life into this new land. It is encouraging as far as it goes; but it is rather like throwing a bucketful of water upon an arid plain and then thinking you are irrigating it.

Of course, the Australian people realise that their future well-being, and even existence, as part of the British family, depends upon the increase of that family in their own regions. The older countries of the earth are becoming stocked. The more determined of the younger generation find there is not elbow-room for their energies, and the fighting and the struggling is often disheartening to them. When they break away, it is usually to the American continent that they go. They cannot be said to be setting their faces in any large numbers toward Australia. It is, however, not only the non-coming of Europeans to Australia which is giving concern to thoughtful people, but the question whether another race, in the turn of time, will insist upon occupying the northern sections of the continent? For be it remembered that Asia, India, China and Japan particularly are crowded. The struggle for existence in those lands is even more severe than in western countries. Japan is packed to the bursting-point. Japan must have somewhere to send her surplus population. Japan is looking round the eastern world and marking the spots where her statesmen want that population to go.

It is well to step aside from the Australian, the British and the Imperial standpoint, and regard the

matter with some aloofness of thought. All beings were placed upon this earth by Divine intention. Therefore, what right has a tiny population like that of Australia, an eastern country inhabited by men from the west, to say to the mighty hordes in the other eastern lands, "We are not developing this country, but we do not intend to allow you to come in and develop it?"

It is too much for human nature, influenced as it is by a thousand things, to regard the question dispassionately. It is, however, within the range of obligation that the Australians should consider the whole matter from the point of view of self-interest.

They know that the yellow races desire to come to Australia.

They possess sonorous Acts of Parliament prohibiting the landing of yellow people. They should know that these Acts of Parliament would amount to little more than paper declarations if behind them were not the naval power of Great Britain.

At present there exists an alliance between Great Britain and Japan—but an alliance only lasts so long as both parties find it convenient. Australian statesmen with imagination may possibly glance into the future, and contemplate the possibility of the British Navy being worsted in the western seas. It is fit that such statesmen should contemplate what would be the action of Japan under such circumstances?

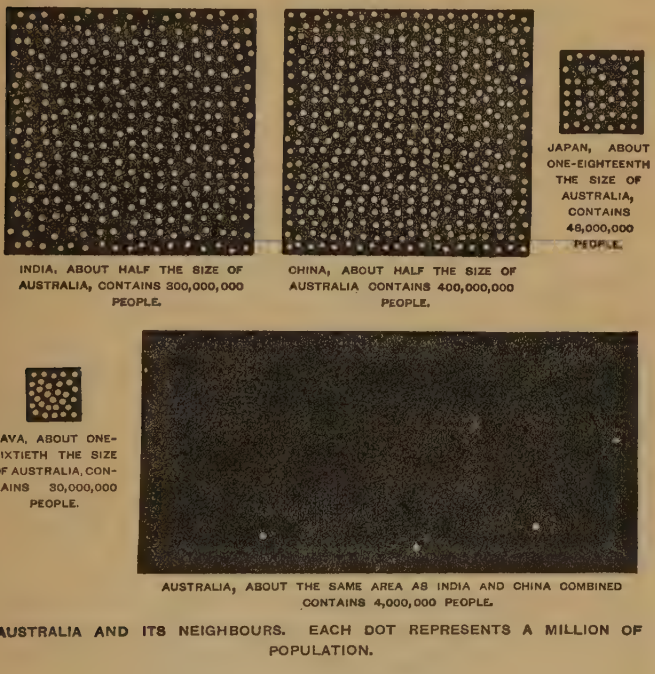
Japan has a passion for colonies. Japan would undoubtedly turn her eyes to those regions in

northern Australia, capable of so much, but actually and comparatively producing so little. I know the bravery of the Australians. I know they would do their utmost to resist the invaders. Let them, however, face facts with unblinking eyes and recognise that with their limited population, their scant armaments, and all their valour, they could not drive out the Japanese from the northern territories.

At present the natural increase of the population of Japan is 700,000 a year. The natural increase of Australia is 65,000 a year. Instead of resisting the coming of Asiatics by fighting, the sane policy is to turn all available parts of Australia to productiveness and to draw millions of capable workers to the land so that no Power could say to the Commonwealth: "You have no right as a nation, unable to develop this land to its full powers, to lock the doors against the rest of the world. You claim as justification in taking Australia from the blackfellows, the aborigines, that they were not utilising it for the benefit of mankind. Neither are you."

Not only the most immediate, but the greatest of all problems facing the people of the Commonwealth, is how they are going to populate the continent which they now possess. I have mentioned the limited amount of immigration into Australia. It should be remembered that there is also some emigration from Australia. Some years ago the well-known Australian writer, Dr. Fitchett, was subjected to attack in the Commonwealth Parliament because he dared to inform the world that there was what he called a "ripple" of emigration.

The onslaught was made upon him not on the ground that he was inaccurate, but because he should reveal the truth. It was asserted he was


INDIA, ABOUT HALF THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA, CONTAINS 300,000,000 PEOPLE.
CHINA, ABOUT HALF THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA CONTAINS 400,000,000 PEOPLE.
JAPAN, ABOUT ONE-EIGHTEENTH THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA, CONTAINS 48,000,000 PEOPLE.
JAVA, ABOUT ONE-SIXTIETH THE SIZE OF AUSTRALIA, CONTAINS 30,000,000 PEOPLE.
AUSTRALIA, ABOUT THE SAME AREA AS INDIA AND CHINA COMBINED CONTAINS 4,000,000 PEOPLE.

AUSTRALIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS. EACH DOT REPRESENTS A MILLION OF POPULATION.

doing an unkind thing to Australia even to suggest the possibility that people were leaving.

Now, there is no country on the face of this earth where discontents are not to be found, where there are not individuals who, with the best chances of success, make failures. I heard woeful complaints from individuals about Australia not coming up to

their expectations. Since my return to England I have had the opportunity of perusing letters from settlers who went out a few years ago and who are full of bitterness. It is the natural tendency of all emigration officials to paint the advantages of the country they are advertising in the brightest of colours. There are people who accept their statements to the full, and, being of a buoyant and optimistic disposition, imagine that they have only to go from England, where the struggle is severe, to Australia, and there the plums of life will drop into their mouths without effort on their part. These people are disappointed. They write home and tell their friends of their hardships. Their statements get into the newspapers, and investigators like myself receive numerous communications from intending emigrants asking if I can say whether these dolorous complaints are justified or not?

Precisely the same thing happens in regard to the United States, Canada, South Africa and South America. The thing to be borne in mind is not individual failure, but whether, viewing the country as a whole, the ordinary man, with capabilities suitable for the work to which he applies himself, is likely to succeed. By my elbow lies a letter which reached me from a man who has settled not a thousand miles from Sydney. Let me give an extract:

"I beg to say that I arrived in this country last October with my family, consisting of four sons and two daughters, from Sutton, Surrey, with the

purpose of going on the land with three of my sons. My eldest, Dr. ——, is now in practice at G——. He is a Guy's man. When I arrived I discovered that the Government had no land suitable—in fact, only small areas in isolated and detached portions, quite unsuitable and extortionately high in price, owing to the whole of the available land of this country being in the hands of the large owners, who won't part except on a boom price.

"I was led to believe by the agents at home that I should be welcomed to this country—first, because I was a man of capital, with a large family, and secondly, because I was going on the land with grown-up sons who had been specially trained for the purpose. My sons had been through a course at an agricultural college and the Crystal Palace School of Mechanical Engineering. They are 19 and 27 years of age. But I had the utmost difficulty to get them placed, although these boys are hard workers and have given every satisfaction.

"This is a grand country if it were properly settled; but under the present system it will never be settled. How can it? The Australians want our capital, and only so many settlers as the financial houses can deal with, because these institutions are at present up to their necks in loans on land and cannot cope with more. It is their fear that, if they open up the country too fast, others will smell the good chances out and come and share the cake.

"There is a great and prosperous future for this terra incognita, and you will do the Empire the

kindest service if you will tell the Australians of the great danger they are in, of an alien race taking it away not only from them, but from others across the sea who have footed the bill for them and who have a greater right than themselves even, because they across the sea are still paying, whilst these are only making promises after years of fat profits out of the pockets of the other man."

This is not a communication from an ignorant man, but from a gentleman who has considerable right to express an opinion.

The population of Australia at the present time is roughly four and a quarter millions. Elsewhere I will deal with its distribution and fluctuation. The point I wish to press at present is the slowness of its increase. During the ten years 1899-1908 the natural increase was a little over half a million, whilst the net immigration increase was only 21,272, varying considerably, from 1,736 in 1899 to 13,150 in 1908. Anyway, the total increase of population in those ten years amounted only to 610,591.

The figures of immigrants supplied me by State statisticians did not tally with those supplied by the Commonwealth statistician. State statisticians include all immigrants settling in each State, even if they have only come from a neighbouring State; whereas the Commonwealth statistician only includes immigrants on their first arrival in the country. I take the latter figures. The net immigration into the various States for 1908 amounted to only 13,150. In that year of 1908,

however, 72,208 immigrants arrived in Australia: from the United Kingdom 21,416, from New Zealand 26,357, from other British possessions 13,481, and from foreign countries 10,954. Here, then, is a startling result—72,208 immigrants arrived in Australia in 1908, and 59,058 people emigrated from Australia that year!

Surely there is something wrong in that, whilst the wave, however small, of immigrants is beating upon the shores of Australia, there is a back-wash carrying most of them away again! There is a flow back to the old lands from the United States and Canada. But nowhere is it so disproportionate as in Australia.

What is the reason of this? When I was studying the situation in Australia, I was provided with innumerable reasons. The argument that Australia is so far from the older lands that it does not attract, cannot apply in this instance, because here the issue is: After they come, why do they leave?

Is it the fear of Socialism? That explanation was frequently given to me. But I hardly think it is the true cause, because most of the fresh arrivals are working people, who at any rate have got nothing to lose by Socialistic legislation.

Is it that Australians, having made their pile, clear out of the country and go and live in Europe? There is a good deal of this, but by no means sufficient to account for the tremendous outflow.

Talk to any of the "advanced" politicians, and they will, without hesitation, tell you the real explanation is the difficulty to secure land; the conse-

quent pressing of the mass of the people into the towns, with the result that there is unemployment.

We have reached the point where everybody admits that the country is capable of holding an enormous population, and that, unless it is filled with white men, yellow races will make a claim to come in; and whilst there is an influx of immigrants into the land, there is an outflow almost as great.

Bold and clear, however, stands the fact that if Australia is going to work out its destiny as a nation, it must have people. It is not only a matter of saying, "Come to this happy land." All sorts of issues contribute to the complexity of the problem. Sufficient here it is to look at the question from one point of view, namely: Australia needs people, and what is she doing to get them?

When I come to deal with the various States it will be shown what the Governments are doing in order to attract new settlers. Since the arrival in London of Sir George Reid, the High Commissioner, the Commonwealth has been considerably advertised. This is good. But to the inquirer who is thinking of emigrating to the Antipodes, and is doubtful where he shall go, the pushing of the special merits of the States by their particular representatives in London, with, of course, the suggestion that the other States can in no way compare with that which a particular agent champions, produces confusion and not a little distress.

Meanwhile, excellent work is done by the British Immigration League of Australia. It will be re-

membered that, moved by popular enthusiasm, and stimulated by the example of New Zealand, Australia decided to contribute towards the building of a "Dreadnought." Large sums were subscribed for this purpose; but as a new arrangement was made between the Commonwealth and the Imperial Government, this money was freed for other purposes. It was determined to devote it to the building of a naval training college and of depot farms for British immigrants. About £40,000 is available for the naval college and about £43,000 is in hand for the farms. It is proposed that at these farms British immigrants be given, in exchange for their labour, a short course of practical training, without in any way competing with the higher training afforded to paying students at the agricultural colleges. After their course at the farms, the immigrants will pass on to situations in the country with the advantage of having acquired a fair practical knowledge of local conditions.

The "Dreadnought" farm scheme has received general approval both in the Commonwealth and at home, because the main proposal is to emigrate Britons to Greater Britain. The work is chiefly in the hands of prominent Sydney residents. Melbourne citizens are following the example of their neighbours. Thus, arrangements are being made to provide an agricultural start for at least 200 British lads. The States of New South Wales and Victoria, however, have no responsibility in regard to choosing them or paying their fares. This must be done by the British public. There are

plenty of applications. Indeed, at the time of writing (1910), some 300 applications have been received, and of these five per cent. can pay their fares (£16), forty-five can pay part, and fifty per cent. have no money saved, but have strong physique and good characters. At home, under the direction of Rev. R. L. Gwynne, the Kent Colonising Association is doing splendid work in looking out for suitable lads. The proposal is to raise money amongst British people favourable to the plan, so that young fellows may be lent a sufficient sum with which to make a start in the southern world.

Besides local conditions, as to the treatment of immigrants, it should be remembered that there are various Immigration Restriction Acts on the statute book of the Commonwealth. For instance, there is a dictation test, which is really intended to act as a bar against Asiatic and other coloured labour. There is a provision for the deportation of non-British subjects who are guilty of crime. No person is allowed to enter the Commonwealth if a contract has been entered into with an employer to do certain work unless it has been approved by the minister in charge of immigration. The procedure of having to obtain the sanction of the Government before a man can go from England to Australia to take up a definite post is undoubtedly a hindrance. The Commonwealth Government makes it clear that the approval of a contract will not be given if it is made with a view to affecting an industrial dispute, or if the remuneration and other terms are not as advantageous to the contracting immigrant as those

current for workers of the same class at the place where the contract is to be performed. There is an additional provision that, where the proposed immigrant is not a British subject born in the United Kingdom, or descendant of such a person, it has to be proved that it is difficult for the employers to obtain in the Commonwealth a worker of at least equal skill and ability. This practically amounts to prohibiting any foreigner from entering Australia with a fixed job to go to.

## CHAPTER IV

### STRAY NOTES

"The London lights are far abeam
Behind a bank of cloud,
Along the shore the gaslights gleam,
The gale is piping loud;
And down the Channel, groping blind,
We drive her through the haze
Towards the land we left behind:
The good old land of 'never mind,'
And old Australian ways."

ANDREW BARTON PATERSON.

SOME of our town and village names at home are quaint and apt—we could not fancy them being anything else. Most of them "just growed," like Topsy. But in new lands names are applied which are singular, like Medicine Hat or Kicking Horse Pass.

When in Australia I started collecting curious names. In New South Wales alone I found thirty Dead Horse Flats—you can see the wide levels, with a dead horse as the only sign; twenty-seven Tin-Pot Gullies—cannot you imagine the gullies with the old tin pots lying round? one hundred and thirty Sandy Creeks—easily to be thought of; ninety Sugarloaf Hills. All in one State.

The most curious place I heard of in Australia was Will-I-Go-Bung. Strange chap, who stuck that

name to the spot where he settled, hoping to make, but yet doubting whether he would make, a fortune! Did he go bung? Nobody knows.

Even the most insular of non-wandering British readers knows that Australia grows many things. But what do you think is the chief crop?

"Potentialities!"

It is scarcely possible for any orator, reared beneath the Southern Cross, to have his tongue wagging for five minutes without uttering that word "potentialities." "Mesopotamia" was a blessed word to some old lady, but not half so blessed as is "potentialities" to the Australians.

There was a friend of mine who occasionally accompanied me to public functions, and his right eyelid used to answer in signal to my left eyelid when "potentialities" was trotted out.

They tell you about the rich potentialities of their district, the potentialities of their State, the giant potentialities of the Northern Territory. I do not think I ever went to a public luncheon, dinner, or meeting without hearing about Australia's "potentialities." I do not mention the word as a joke, but to show how a single word gets rooted in the public mind and sprouts on every conceivable occasion.

I remember a judge saying to me: "What has struck you most in Australia?"

"The number of times you use the word 'potentialities,'" I replied—rather at random, but a sufficiently near shot, as we were at dinner. He expressed astonishment. I explained. He assured

me I was mistaken; he did not say it was never used, but—rarely. Yet within twenty minutes he, himself, used the word twice—and, like a good fellow, he threw back his head and laughed.

Yes, Australia seethes with "potentialities"—blessed word!

The hotels of Australia are excellent. There are not the swagger places we have in London, nor the superb gilt and plush caravanserais they have in America. But they are good, and they are comfortable. In towns like Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, I found hotels considerably in advance of the class of hotel we should find in the same-sized places in England. There was none of the rawness that one experiences in the smaller towns in the western wilderness of the United States.

The thing that is really bad is the fish. It is quite possible that they have fish worth eating in the southern seas. But it never came my way. During four months I strove nobly to find a bit of fish that came within a dozen miles of English excellence. I failed—and I had the honour of being present at some first-rate dinners.

You might think that house rent in a land of such expanse would be cheap. It is dear; ridiculously dear. Clothing is about a third dearer than at home. Food is about the same, though, if anything, slightly cheaper. The dinners in the working-men's eating-houses are the best and cheapest I have seen anywhere.

The Australians—and the Australiennes particularly—drink tea at every meal, also between

meals. They ought to be a nation of dyspeptics. They are not. There is more advertising of brands of tea than anything else. Every hoarding blares at you the merits of some special tea. I never knew there were so many teas.

There aren't. Shopkeepers like to have an "exclusive" brand. They get it. Other shops also have "exclusive" brands. They are often just the same teas in different wrappings. But this is a secret which must not be whispered in Australia.

Aye, but the Scots are clannish. If you want to know how clannish—well, go to Australia. The Scot, so I am informed, has a guid conceit of himself. But at home and in England he takes things for granted. No Scot now, unless he be a lord or a gillie, wears the kilts. But most Scotsmen in Australia have kilts, and it is a grand occasion when they can put them on and strut. Nearly every town has its Caledonian Society, or its Highland Society, sometimes both. And every society has its band of pipers.

I am suspected of being a Scot myself. So at places like Sydney and Melbourne, not only were there the Premier and the Lord Mayor to give the touring journalist a greeting, but above the cheers of the crowd, come to see "that fellow Foster Fraser," was the skirl of the pipes, with half a dozen gorgeously kilted pipers blowing their hardest. It was all very flattering.

One night I was the guest of a Scotch society in Sydney. There were the rugged-faced old men who had come out to this far-away land, and there were

young fellows born in it—but every one proud to have Scotch blood in his veins.

There was Scotch liquor drunk and Scotch songs sung, and Scotch speeches made. Many of the old boys, who were never going to see the romantic land of their forefathers again, let their thoughts wander, and tears came as references were made to places they knew lang syne, but will never know again.

This love of the old country was something not to be reasoned about, but only felt. And never till I die will I forget, when it was necessary to bid them adieu, how hundreds of them sprang to their feet and sang, "Will you no' come back again?"

Absence does make the heart grow fonder. At a little town in New South Wales the landlord of my hotel was a Londoner. He was doing well, but his heart pined for "the great smoke," as they call London in Australia. He fussed about a lot when I arrived. I did not understand what it meant until afterwards he came to my room and asked, "How long is it since you were in London, sir?"

"Oh, about three months."

"And I've been here four years," he added, "and you are the first gentleman from London I've seen. Do you know the King's Road, Chelsea, sir?"

"Oh, very well."

"And is it just the same?"

"Just the same, as far as I know."

Then he said rather sadly, "I lived in the King's Road, and I often wonder what it is like? I would

give half I've got to have a walk along the King's Road."

Just to see someone fresh from London—his dirty, grimy, beloved London—that was something he hungered for. He came down to the station the next morning. There were many good-byes to be made. He chucked something into my carriage. "Just some cigars, sir, to remind you of the Londoner you met out here." And the last I saw of him was that his eyes were full of tears—for when would it be his lot to see London again?

At Melbourne I made the acquaintance of an old London waiter. I forget how many years he had been in Australia—about thirty, I fancy. He was the real article, transplanted. Not the modern London waiter, who is usually a German or a Swiss, but the old type, rather like an archdeacon, clean-shaven, obsequious, and gently rubbing his hands as, with body slightly bent, he sought the will of the man who had an order to give.

He knew London in the 'sixties; had waited in Pall Mall clubs, and had some anecdotes of well-known men in those times.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I'd like to see the old place —very changed, I presume, sir. Yes, I suppose I'm an Australian now, sir; but I never forget I'm a Londoner, sir. We have a society here, sir, of the old London waiters, and every St. George's Day, sir, we meet—well, generally in a cellar, sir—and we drink 'Good health to old London.' Thank you, sir. I thought you came from London as soon as I heard you speak, sir. They call me the

'Cockney' here, sir. Well, I am not ashamed. I ought not to be, ought I, sir?"

How do the Australians amuse themselves?

Well, horse-racing comes first, and then cricket. But horse-racing is easily first. Nowhere in the world are there such splendid race-horses as in Australia. The States, excepting Victoria and New South Wales, approve the pastime—and take part of the plunder.

The totalisator is used. That is, you bet with the State. It is something like this: you back your fancy and you plant your money with officials. If you back the favourite you may be sure thousands are doing the same. Say the favourite wins. Then all the money is divided, a certain large proportion equally amongst those who backed the favourite, a smaller proportion amongst those who backed the second horse, and a lesser proportion amongst those who backed the third. If you have backed a winning outsider which few others have backed you get an enormous amount. If nearly everybody has backed the favourite, which wins, you won't get much more than your money back. Anyway, you get your share, less 10 per cent. I think 7½ of this is appropriated by the State, and the racing officials take the other 2½ per cent. to keep up the course, the grand stand and all the paraphernalia—and very well they do it.

The States which join in make enormous sums. Suppose the betting public bring £10,000 on to the ground, and it is all used in backing on the first race. The public get only £9,000 back. They put that

on the second race, and then the public only get £8,100 back. And so on.

I have sometimes wondered what shrieking there would be in England if it were seriously proposed to introduce the totalisator there.

Next, the theatre—light comedy or pantomime. They have pantomimes all the year round in Australia. Now and then there is a rash of seriousness. There was a Shakespearean revival when I was in Australia. But the more entertaining plays are most sure of a run. As a rule the plays are imported from London. The acting is first rate. When, however, it is advertised that such and such a play is better staged and better acted than it was in London—well, well, if it brings happiness to believe that, let it be believed.

Australia has good cause to preen itself on its newspapers. With town populations that are small, in comparison with those of the great cities of Europe and America, it is little short of wonderful the way in which first-class morning, evening, and weekly illustrated papers are turned out. They keep to the British rather than follow the American model. They do not screech. They are dignified. This is one of the secrets of their power.

With an experience of newspapers all the world over, I know of no place where the Press exercises so strong an influence. Newspapers have power in London; but there have been occasions when in politics the greatest city in the world has pronounced a verdict different from the teachings of the journals which own the largest circulations.

In both Britain and the United States there is a tendency on the part of leading politicians to ignore the influence of the Press. Not so in Australia. Leading politicians not once, but many times, told me that they would have been unable to take a certain action had they not had the support of certain newspapers; or that they were unable to follow a particular line of conduct because they had not the support of particular journals in favour of that course. Recognising, therefore, the strength of the Australian newspapers, it was excellent to find that the journals throughout the country were animated by a fine sense of responsibility. In all branches, from careful and judicious reporting of events up to the special leading articles, a high tone prevailed. As one somewhat acquainted with the politics of the wider world, I was impressed with the range of knowledge in regard to European politics revealed in the leading articles. This was to me all the more remarkable because the cablegrams reporting European events are, owing to distance and high cost, usually short.

Many a time Australian journalists would find fault with the limited amount of Australian news which appears in the average London paper compared with the amount of English news which appears in the Australian papers. They thought that one was as important as the other. After all, what a country is doing is the important thing, and I sometimes thought there was an absence of sense of proportion. Australia's population is less than that of the County of Lancashire. Yet, in general,

more news appears in the London papers about Australia than about Lancashire. Besides, if, because of Australia's position in the Empire, she should receive more space in oversea journals than she does, she in return should give more space say to Canada, where the population is half as much again as in Australia. Yet very rarely does even a single paragraph appear in the Australian papers about what is happening in the North American Dominion.

It struck me that Australian writers felt a little sore at what was considered to be neglect or lack of appreciation of their country in British papers. There is no earthly foundation for this. What seems important to the man in Sydney may sink to comparative insignificance when looked at through London glasses many thousands of miles away.

But the standard of quality and the widespread information which the Australian newspapers present, is, in selection and manner of treatment, superior to what I have noticed in any towns of similar size in any other part of the English-speaking world.

Frankness is a delightful trait of the Australian. So frequently I had this question bluntly put to me, "Do you think we talk Cockney?"

To charge a person with talking like a Cockney has behind it an intention to be supercilious and rude. Yet we all know that, in London, certain sections of the population have an intonation and a distinctive pronunciation which goes by the name of Cockney. Before ever I went to Australia the

usual informative friend told me the Australians had a Cockney twang; but for the sake of my life I must never say so, for they would take umbrage and show dislike.

So when the plain question was plumped at me, "Do you think we talk Cockney?" what was a poor man to do? Equivocate!

Now it is a remarkable fact that a considerable number of the people do possess the Cockney tongue. Say is "sye"; cake is "kyke"; "down the bay" is "dahn the bye." I have heard an Australian woman, who had never been away from her own country, talk Cockney with the fluency of a real Londoner.

But to say that all Australians talk Cockney is just one of those exaggerations which the mass of people have a right to repudiate. The grown Australian struck me as a particularly clean speaker; that is, he spoke without the slovenliness of which we have plenty in England, and with a correct pronunciation.

Yet that Cockney is spoken is undoubted. The speaking of it is not limited to one stratum of society. The curious thing to me was that Cockney was spoken by one member of a family, whilst the other members of the family spoke perfectly correct English. It is not only the visitor whose ears notice the Cockney. Australians themselves are conscious of it; they talked freely to me about it, and even made fun about it.

Where does this Cockney accent come from? To say it is an inheritance from London settlers is

absurd. My own belief is that it is an independent growth, partly due to climate, but mainly due to carelessness in speech. I watched carefully, and I noted it was chiefly children and young women who had the loose pronunciation—very rarely a man, and only occasionally a woman, who had reached middle life. As folk advanced in years they seemed to grow out of it. But that Cockney is to be heard in Australia is undoubted.

## CHAPTER V

### ROUNDABOUT NOTES

"The toil of it none may share;
By yourself must the way be won,
Through fervid or frozen air
Till the overland journey's done;
And I would not take, for your own dear sake, one
Thorn from your back, my son."

JOHN LE-GAY BRERETON.

SOME day, in volume form, there will be published the records of the story of the exploration of Australia. It will provide as romantic and as thrilling a narrative as any tale of adventure, and would take its place on many bookshelves alongside "Hakluyt's Voyages."

Some accounts have been published; others are apparently lost for all time; others are still in manuscript. It was my rare pleasure to finger the pages and peruse the fading words telling of wanderings in the mysterious interior. There is a noble work lying to the hand of some Australian writer to recall, more fully than has hitherto been done, the epic of Australia's youth, when indeed it was a terra incognita to the world, and when men had brave hearts to adventure in the wilds.

Dimly through history emerges the ancient belief that to the south of Asia lay another continent.

I have myself—in the Doge's Palace at Venice and amongst the old maps—found evidence of a mighty island to the south of Java. Then, by the names along the coast we can tell where, centuries ago, Dutch vessels touched, follow the range of Captain Cook's voyage, and mark the spots named by the French navigators. But to men of English birth the honour is due for penetrating the interior—that interior which was as though a place accursed, and which, as if dominated by some evil sprite, claimed toll of the lives of men who dared to pull the veil aside.

To those of us who live in the older world, the names of such men as Bass and Flinders, Evans and Oxley, Hamilton Hume and Allan Cunningham, Charles Sturt, MacMillan, A. C. Gregory, Edward John Eyre, Burke and Wills, Gosse and Ernest Giles—what are they but a string of more or less common names?

They were the men who pushed far beyond the coast line, even crossing the sandy wastes—and some of them have left their bones to bleach.

There is public recognition in the way of statues to one or two of these men. Before, however, it is too late, and whilst possibly photographs are in existence of some of the more brave, it would be well if Australia beautified her towns and recalled good deeds by erecting still further statues of these noble men.

There is something significant and poetical about some of the native names, especially those given to rivers and to creeks. And the names left by for-

gotten travellers conjure up pictures in the mind. There is Muddy Creek and Dismal Creek, Holy Joe Creek and Black Gin Creek, Dinner River and Breakfast Creek, Sunday Creek, Pie Creek, Welcome River, Brown Bun Creek, Tin Can Inlet, and many similar quaint appellations. Also a touch of romance has been left in the name given to many sluggish streams. A traveller, having left some loved one on the coast, or perhaps in the old country, halting at night by some freshly discovered stream, would likely enough let his thoughts wander to the woman he cared for, and then give her name to the brook. So we find scattered through the land creeks carrying the names of Maggie, Dora, Mary, Lizzie, Lydia, Jeannie, Maria and Marian.

Half of this continent of three million square miles lies within the tropical zone—a weird country in its way, with practically no mountains except comparatively close to the seaboard—the interior something like a saucer, so that although there are one or two big rivers flowing seaward, most of the rivers flow toward the interior and are then lost. Indeed, considerable stretches of the continent are below the level of the sea.

It is an interesting pastime of zoologists to trace the relationship of animals in one part of the world with those in another. So it is easy to find beasts in Asia with first cousins in America. Australia, however, may be said to have stood through the ages in a sort of isolation. Practically no country in the world, except Australia, is without the cat and the pig as natives. True, Australia has the dog, the

dingo, which has similarity with the pariah dogs of South India, the one point of animal relationship between the old world and this new world. Australia, left alone, developed animals with characteristics peculiarly their own. First jumps to thought the kangaroo, an animal which has its like in no other part of the world. In birds there have been special types like the cassowary and the emu, and bower birds, which make their nests a sort of passage and then decorate them with any bright articles they may find; lyre birds, so called because of the peculiar shape of their tails; birds of gorgeous plumage, but not many birds rich in song. There are no vultures, such as are generally to be found in sandy lands. There is, however, a water-holding frog, which can fill itself up and live in the mud for a year—a thing which tells how, through countless generations of frogs, the Australian interior has been subject to drought.

Not a horse, nor a cow, nor a sheep, nor a rabbit, nor a sparrow did Australia originally produce. Yet these have come and have multiplied in a way that is astonishing. It is good for cattle and sheep to increase. The man, however, who first took rabbits to Australia, little knew what he was doing. They became a pest. There must be millions upon millions of them. Man and the law have waged war upon rabbits. I have stayed with kindly settlers who could say nice things about everything and everybody until the word "rabbit" was mentioned; then they burst into towering furies of rage. A scourge of rabbits would come and eat up in the course of a

night almost every blade of grass upon the settler's possessions, so that practically no food was left for his sheep. They fine you in Australia at the present day if you dare to keep pet rabbits. Rabbit wire fences, literally thousands of miles long, have had to be placed across parts of the continent in order to check the scourge. Few Australians will eat rabbit, unless they belong to the poorer classes. They are vermin in Australia. Yet, with cold storage and quick transit to Europe, there is surely the possibility of a great industry in the exportation of the carcases of rabbits.

Some similarity has been noticed between the flora of Australia and that of South Africa. The flowers are bright, but most of them are scentless. There is the brilliant waratah and the golden wattle; but there is neither the variety nor the delicacy of blooms which is to be found in other countries of the world. Except in the south-west parts of the continent there is little forest. In the temperate zones there is considerable growth of eucalyptus trees, crooked of limb, and casting their bark instead of their leaves. Most of the woods are very hard, so that there has to be a considerable importation.

European trees do exceedingly well under fair conditions. There are parts of the continent where the trees are yearly laid low in enormous numbers before the axe. The average Australian is disposed to dispute what is recognised in other countries as a fact, namely, that trees are inclined to draw rain. Now Australia is not over-blessed with rain, and there is the possibility that by the wholesale cutting

down of trees she is hindering rather than helping the very necessary moisture. It is not for me, with the Australians so busy doing the spade-work of getting their country into a fit state, to press the advantages of forestry. But the day cannot be far off when the Australians must take into serious account what they are going to do to replace the trees now being felled in such enormous numbers.

The native plants suitable for human food are few. There are no cereals worth mentioning. So we see that Australia in its natural condition was not fit to carry a large population. Here again is evidence of the romance of the country, because imported cereals flourish to an amazing extent. It is just as though Nature said to the old world, "Here is a passive region; here is the raw material; come and see what you can do with it." Everything grows profusely and multiplies extravagantly—except human beings.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOME PROBLEMS OF POPULATION

"Write not that you content can be,
Pent by that drear and shipless sea
Round lonely islands rolled:
Isles nigh as empty as their deep,
Where men but talk of gold and sheep,
And think of sheep and gold."

WILLIAM PEMBER REEVES.

LIKE other writers, I am prone to apply generalisations to the people of Australia. Yet, bearing in mind that those living in the north are in the tropics, whilst those who live in the south are in a temperate zone, time, climate, and social conditions must produce certain distinctive characteristics.

When in the big towns I was conscious that the people had different traits, just as one may note how different are the people in the north of England from those you meet with in the south. It was not until I returned home and began to bring together the data I had collected that I found that there is more humidity in Melbourne than in Adelaide, and more in Sydney than in either.

Humidity, undoubtedly, has an effect on the energy of the people. Now, mark how pleasant, soft-voiced and delightful the Queenslanders are. Come south and you find more commercialism in

the air of Sydney than in Brisbane. Drop further south still, to Melbourne, and there, there is really something like energy. Continue south till you get to New Zealand, and there you can pass from the charming easy manners of the top of the north island until you get amongst the rugged, determined business men who live at the bottom end of the south island.

In this stretch you see the effect of the climate on the people, just as those of us who have travelled in America can compare the hustle of Chicago with the easy-going of New Orleans. The New Orleans folk are the nicer; but the men of Chicago are those who make the money.

I said something very much like the above in a newspaper article published soon after my return to England. Then came Australian indignation. What could a casual visitor know about it? Fluffy journalists proceeded to scorn. Slackness, indeed! What right had this fellow, Foster Fraser, to talk about slackness when Australia's wealth was so great, and Australians did so well in athletics; how could slackness produce that?

These patriotic gentlemen missed the point. Australia has gone ahead; wonders have been accomplished—but the energy has generally come from men born in Europe, or who are the children of Europeans. Look round the men of mark in Australia. How many of them had grandfathers and grandmothers, or even fathers and mothers born in Australia?

The Australians who were so quick to object to

the deductions I drew: that the race transplanted from Europe to Australia was affected in character by the climate, assumed that what I said was a hasty generalisation drawn from watching some loungers round Sydney. As a matter of fact, this subject of climatic influence on heredity is one I have carefully studied for years. I studied it in Australia as well as elsewhere.

When silly and ignorant retorts were made upon myself, there was some poor satisfaction in receiving batches of letters from old residents, Australians to the backbone, who acknowledged that what I said was too true. And it was by this means I fell in with the published opinions of Dr. Alexander Buttner, of Melbourne, whose authority to speak on this subject no Australian will dispute. Over fifty years' residence in Victoria has forced upon Dr. Buttner the conviction that in cases where both parents are Australian born, the weakening effect of the climate shows itself more and more strikingly with each succeeding generation.

"It is, therefore, my firm belief," he writes, "that the number of children born will steadily decline as the distance from the European family stock increases. An absolute necessity exists, then, that we should once more secure a continual stream of European immigration, if only for the sake of self-preservation. Were it possible to cut the Australian continent off from the rest of the world for a few centuries, I am convinced that not a single descendant of its four million white population would be living. The race would have become extinct.

"In support of my argument upon this subject, I would refer to the fact that, while trees and other plants belonging to Europe develop most luxuriantly in Australia, if watered on hot, windy days, every year's seedlings of such introduced plants deteriorate. Also our horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry are undergoing this regular process of deterioration, which can only be stopped by the introduction of fresh blood from time to time. Our Australian-born population is, so to speak, an exotic one, which, in order to preserve its original vigour of physique and mental stamina, will require an influx of the European races from which it has sprung. Without this influx the white race here is doomed, for the universal law of life, from which there is no escape either for man or the lower orders of creation, without the penalty of obliteration, is that there must be a systematic introduction of animals of the same blood from the countries whence they were originally drawn.

"Being one of the old colonists, and a close observer of the deteriorating influence of this climate," continues Dr. Buttner, "so soon as my six children had passed through their primary education, I made, with pleasure, great paternal and material sacrifices in sending them to Europe for the purpose of there fortifying their constitution during the period of their principal development But whenever a child has reached its twentieth year it should, in my opinion, certainly return to Australia, as otherwise it will form such an attachment to the Old Country that in nine cases out of ten it

will remain there altogether. Parents who can bear the expense—and there are certainly many in Australia—would find that an absence of even a few years would greatly invigorate their children's constitutions and thereby better prepare them for their several active spheres of life—a subject of moment that tasks the thoughts of so many anxious parents at the present time."

The less informed Australian newspaper writers do not alter the laws of nature by ignoring them, nor in chiding the visitor who makes public at home what Australians, given to the study of heredity, know perfectly well.

In their hearts Englishmen regret the differences of over a century ago between themselves and the folk who lived in the North American colonies. It is possible, however, that had it not been for the American War of Independence, Australia would not have come under the British flag. It was that War of Independence which closed to the British authorities the right of sending their convicts to transatlantic plantations. British prisons became full to overcrowding. It was necessary to look round and find another part of the world to which evildoers could be deported. It was Sydney Cove that was decided upon. There the first consignment landed in 1788. Most of those new-comers were men, and for a long period the proportion of white men to white women residents was more than two to one. Gradually, however, through the hundred years which have elapsed, there has been a strong tendency, by natural increase. toward the equalisation of

the sexes, until at the present day the surplus of males over females is only about ten per cent.

The growth of population in the older countries is due to natural causes. Whilst these operate, too, in a new country, there is the increase which comes from immigration. It is the man rather than the woman who leaves his fatherland and settles in a new country. Therefore, although there is a very even balance in the older States, in States like Queensland and Western Australia the proportion of men to women is still considerably larger. At the present time a quarter of the population of the Commonwealth have been born outside Australia, the majority of these being from New Zealand, whilst the remainder can be said to come from the British Isles.

Australia is unique, compared with the United States and Canada, in that—although I came across most excellent German colonists in South Australia—it has practically done nothing whatever to attract people from the Continent of Europe. I found that the settlers of German birth were just over a fraction of one per cent. of the population, that those drawn from Scandinavia (that is Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) number less than a half per cent., those who come from the United States less than a quarter per cent., and those from Italy just over one-sixth per cent.

It is gratifying that the movement to secure population should be directed chiefly toward the British Isles. The idea of rearing another British stock in the South Seas is a fine one. But our

population is limited. At present, from sheer force of circumstances, the magnet which attracts our extra population, desiring to put their powers to the test in new lands, is the Dominion of Canada.

Personally, I do not think that we of the British race have all the agricultural virtues. Accordingly, I believe that those who are genuinely anxious to attract to Australia those people the country needs most, agriculturists, would do well to direct some of their persuasiveness to the rural population of the Continent of Europe. Australians who know anything about the German settlers are well aware what good colonists they make. I have marked the same thing in Canada. They soon become good Canadians, just as the German settlers in the Commonwealth become good Australians. There is nothing to fear, but much to gain, by drawing to the shores of Australia people of other than British race. I am convinced that one of the great factors which has gone to the building up of the United States has been the mixing of virile representatives of the old races in Europe.

At present the Australians are much like Britons. But neither they, nor we, must put on one side the fact that their fresh environment, their new social conditions, their life in varying climates will, in the course of time, produce certain distinctive types. The Australians are a long-lived people. Again and again I was struck with the old men I met. Of course, one meets old men in the United States and in Canada; but there are not the numbers there in proportion to the population that there are in Aus-

tralia. Statistics are not always reliable; but from those I investigated I came to the conclusion that, proportionate to the population, there are more centenarians in Australia than in any other part of the world. This is due to the healthiness of the climate. The diseases which afflict older communities are not so marked in the Commonwealth as elsewhere. Without any question, it may be written that Australia, especially those temperate portions where the mass of the population is already settled, is exceedingly healthy. The State of Victoria has the largest share of people who are over sixty-five years of age.

That being so, one comes to the question: Why is it that the migratory tendency of the people is toward the towns? First and foremost Australia is an agricultural country. Yet only one-half per cent. of the acreage of the continent is devoted to the growing of crops, and, per head of the population, only two and a third acres is devoted to food growing. Sir George Reid, the High Commissioner of the Commonwealth, now resident in London, is a missionary of Empire, and is urging throughout Britain those agriculturists who desire to try their fortunes elsewhere to go to the country which he represents. The Australian Press echo him with the cry, "We do not want more men in the towns; we want fresh settlers on the land." Good! But the Australians themselves are disposed to leave the land and flock into the cities and to bring about that congestion and unemployment of which we so often read.

There are others, besides agriculturists, in England who emigrate. There are artisans, dissatisfied

with the wages they earn in England, and flushed with the prospect of earning the good wages reported from Australia. When they arrive at one of the big ports they cannot follow their calling unless they join one of the trade unions. Trade unions are capital institutions; I believe in them, because they have maintained the status of labour and have resisted the endeavours of the less scrupulous class of employer to lower wages. Once, however, the English trade unionist becomes an Australian trade unionist, he is entwined with the regulations of his society, and it is difficult for him to break loose, become an individualist, and win one of the big prizes which a new country has continuously to offer. I know it is getting near to an exaggeration; but still, in general, the fact stands good, that the men who have done best in Australia have been those who have landed in the country with no particular trade to their hands.

All the people of the Commonwealth agree that the stream of immigration, although increasing, is not flowing with that force which the possibilities of the country would justify. As I have shown, the increase of population is slow. But, viewing the land as a whole, three-quarters of the increase is due to natural causes, and only one-quarter can be ascribed to immigration. Yet, looking over the course of years during the last quarter of a century, the rate of increase shows a marked decline. Dealing with the period between 1861 and 1907, forty-seven years, the official Year Book of the Commonwealth says: "In regard to the contribution of indivi-

dual States to the net immigration of 784,982, it may be said that for two, Victoria and Tasmania, the departures for the period in question actually exceeds the arrivals by 26,713 in the case of the former and 12,488 in that of the latter, while in South Australia the total gain for the period was only 13,663. In New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, on the other hand, the additions due to net immigration during the forty-seven years were respectively 377,498, 246,923, and 186,099."

The increase in the population of the Commonwealth is practically at the same rate as that of Germany—an old country, which is losing some of its population by emigration. Germany is a densely populated land. Australia is a sparsely populated land. Yet in proportion to her population, which ought to increase aboundingly, Australia travels at the same rate as that of Germany.

The people of Australia take much satisfaction in comparing themselves with the people of the United States. Let us look at the increase of population in both countries under comparable conditions; that is, examine the growth of the United States in density of population when it was a new country as we can examine the growth of population in Australia whilst it is still a new country. Cover two generations of comparable time and we find that the pro rata increase in Australia is only half what it was in the United States. The Commonwealth statistician, Mr. G. H. Knibbs, has made a computation that if Australia continues to increase at her present rate she will have in 1950 a popula-

tion of 7,949,000 inhabitants; whereas, if her growth were the same as that of the United States under comparable conditions, the number of inhabitants would be 15,058,000.

This is matter for deep concern. Australia has the land, and she has the possibilities. Yet the continent is the most sparsely occupied continent on the face of this globe. Australia carries 1.41 persons to the square mile, whilst America carries 10, Africa 13, Asia 55, and Europe 111. Indeed, Australia has a smaller white population to the square mile than has Siberia.

Keeping in mind that Australia is pre-eminently an agricultural country, we have now to consider the occupations in which her grown men are engaged. In rough figures, there are 100,000 belonging to the professional classes, 100,000 engaged in transport, 200,000 in commercial occupations, 400,000 belonging to the industrial classes, and 500,000 who are primary producers, that is engaged upon the land. The proportions are not satisfactory. Of course, some of these classes are interdependent one upon the other. Transport and commerce naturally rely a great deal upon manufacturers. So we come to this, that whilst Australia at the present time is calling to the United Kingdom to send out agriculturists, more than half the men of Australia are engaged in industrial pursuits. I am not saying anything against industrial occupations. That would be foolish. But as labour is protected in the Commonwealth—as it has a perfect right to be if the people think well—wages are increased, and the cost

of the manufactured article is such that it cannot compete in the open market with a similar article made in countries where wages are not so high, the growth of Australia's industries must depend upon the increase in her agricultural population. The agricultural population, however, has not grown, and is not growing to that extent which gives one sound hope that there can, in the immediate future, be any striking development of industry.

It is almost a platitude to say that the Australians are on the right lines in centreing their efforts upon securing people to go on the land. I will even go so far as to say that, at the present time, Australia has no need for settlers of the artisan class. There are enough artisans to supply the wants of the Commonwealth in manufactures. Again, artisans will increase as the market increases by having a larger population taking up land in the rural areas. I am well aware of the cry heard in the cities that too much land is locked up, and that the unlocking of it by legislation will provide better opportunities for those desirous of securing a livelihood in agriculture. Yet I am not blind to the fact that Australians themselves frequently display a dislike for bush life and make their way to the towns at the first opportunity. We have that trouble in England—forsaking the country for the towns. But they do not have it in Canada.

## CHAPTER VII

### SHEEP, WOOL AND MUTTON

"I'll sing to you a fine new song, made by my blessed mate,
Of a fine Australian squatter who had a fine estate,
Who swore by right pre-emptive at a sanguinary rate
That by his rams, his ewes, his lambs, Australia was made great—
Like a fine Australian squatter, one of the olden time."

OLD BUSH SONG.

THERE are 100,000,000 sheep in the Commonwealth. Over 500,000,000 lbs. of wool are exported. Roughly speaking this means a gross value of wool exports of £25,000,000. In the year closing June 30th, 1909, the number of sheep slaughtered in the Commonwealth was 11,094,397.

This tremendous business has grown up within the last hundred years. The story of the founding of the wool industry of Australia is something of a romance. The continent had no native sheep, and when over a century ago British boats were crawling down the coasts seeking for harbours and the genesis of a colony was started where Sydney now stands, food was difficult to procure.

By some means a few sheep from Ireland and a few sheep from India were brought to New South Wales. It was in 1797 that several fine wool merinoes were imported from the Cape and distributed among six or seven individuals. Amongst

these was Captain John Macarthur. All the little flocks which were consequent upon this importation disappeared except that of Captain Macarthur—they were probably eaten. Captain Macarthur crossed his Cape sheep with those already in the island. Later, in England, when George III. had a sale of the progeny of sheep which had been presented to him from Spain, Macarthur became the possessor of some of the best, and paid the highest price that had ever been paid in England for sheep. These he proposed to export to Australia. Curiously enough, however, he was for a time barred by an ancient statute which made it a felony to export live sheep from Great Britain. That difficulty was overcome by the exercise of commonsense. Macarthur brought his sheep to New South Wales. By judicious breeding he began cultivating sheep for their wool. This process has been continued until to-day. No sheep in the world carry so much wool as do those of Australia. It is thick, matted, long, and beautifully fine, and is accepted as the best product which goes into the mighty woollen mills of Yorkshire, as well as the woollen centres of France, Germany, and the United States.

The sheep thrived. What some of the early settlers thought a barren land produced excellent food. Macarthur, though resisted by some of the officials governing the new colony, received authority from the home Government to take possession of the best stretch of feeding ground—and he came to this knowledge by the fact that cattle which had strayed some years before had settled themselves

there. Others saw the advantage of wool growing. The British Government encouraged them. Land was obtained for little more than the asking, all that was necessary was the securing of a licence. One squatter paid £80 a year for 400,000 acres. The system was rather haphazard; four landowners paid no more for nearly 8,000,000 acres than four others did for one-twentieth of that area. Thus it was that some of the finest stretches of the country passed into private ownership. Anyway, the greatest industry that Australia has ever had, that of providing wool for the world, began to advance not by steps and strides but by leaps and bounds. In 1807, 245 lbs. of wool were shipped from Australia. In 1835, it was 3,776,191 lbs. In the last official year it was over 500,000,000 lbs.

Squatters made immense fortunes. There was no harsh weather and no necessity to look after the sheep at the lambing time. They could be left to themselves, except to be rounded up each year to be clipped. Few men were required to look after the runs during most of the year. Gangs of clippers, starting in the north, would work southwards, visit stations and clip for the squatters. At first the shearing was done by hand, and the man who could shear a hundred sheep a day was the "ringer"—the leader. Now, however, the shearing is done by machinery, quicker, cleaner, closer, and with fewer horrible gashes in the flesh of the beast.

As you approach a shearing shed you hear the buzz of the machinery. The sheep, with wool growing over their heads so that sometimes they are

blinded, are in long pens. Men half-stripped, reeking with perspiration, have each a sheep with its head between their knees. They are running the clippers over the body with long sweeps of the arm. The beginner may cut the skin. But the experienced shearer runs the clipper over the back, round the belly, between the legs, along the throat, by the ears, and in little more than a minute the wool is lying on the ground like a torn coat, and the shorn sheep with the pink skin showing through the close cropped wool is pushed through a door into a yard to join his clipped mates. Boys grip the wool and carry it away. A panel is raised and another sheep is seized. So it goes on through the long hot hours of the Australian day. The shearers are paid well, for besides lodging and food it is easy enough to make £1 a day. The English shearer would be astonished at the rapidity at which the clipping is done on the Australian sheep stations.

Fine, lithe-limbed and stalwart fellows are these shearers. A little rough in their manners, they are good fellows in their hearts. Few of them have any family ties; they care nothing for the morrow. When the season is over they are in funds. Some of them bank their money. But too many find their way to the nearest tavern, where the vilest liquor is to be obtained; and there for a week or a fortnight they have a wild drunken orgy, until their money is gone and they are turned out to search for means of livelihood elsewhere. The moralist should not be too hard upon them. Remember, they lead lonely lives on far-away stations; they have little

acquaintance with home life or culture; their idea of civilisation is to meet other good fellows in the taverns and "shout" drinks to one another.

All the world wants Australian wool. Formerly it was exported to the London mart and there sold by auction. Much of it is so sent at the present time; but the demand is so great that each year the great mill-owners send out their own buyers. On the P. & O. boat by which I travelled to Australia, half the saloon passengers were wool-buyers from England, France, and Germany. They are expert men and can tell by the feel the quality of the clip. The bales are sold by auction, and the clamour, the shouting, the gesticulations, the fierce struggle for possession, for all the world reminded me of the hubbub in the "pit" of Chicago when a great gamble in the wheat of the world is in progress.

For many years fortunes were in wool alone. The clipped sheep was of little value. For there were more sheep than could be eaten by the small Australian population and exportation of the meat was impossible. Then the system of freezing was introduced; ships were specially constructed to carry frozen mutton from Australia to England, and a further means of acquiring a fortune was opened up. In the old days a shorn sheep could often be bought for 6d. or 1s., and failing that the carcase was boiled down for the tallow that was in it. Now it is sent as food for the poorer millions in the Old World.

Strange it is that Australia should produce such excellent wool, and yet the price procured for Aus-

tralian mutton in the British market be so exceedingly poor. This is not because Australian mutton is bad—I personally have tasted some of the best mutton in the world in Australia—but it is due to the haphazard, careless and almost criminal negligence with which the sheep are treated before being slaughtered, and the manner in which the carcases are exported. The treatment of the sheep intended for slaughter is nothing less than inhuman. The merinoes do not travel well; they are worn and feverish; they are often driven long distances to the trucking yards over hot and dusty roads; frequently there are no drinking facilities, and the brutes are put into the trucks in a thirsty condition.

Take the state of affairs in New South Wales, which is the centre of the mutton export trade. I have no hesitation in saying that the manner in which the sheep are treated there is worse than in any land on the face of this earth. The sheep are loaded from the side of the truck instead of from the ends as in more progressive countries. The trucks are loosely coupled and the jolting is injurious. The trains are slow. So stock are often in the train from thirty to forty hours, passing through a country where there is much dust and where the temperature is frequently over 100 degrees. The sheep fail and drop, and drovers are obliged to use poles to get them upon their legs. In a depreciated condition the sheep are driven to the saleyards, and after that are pushed along seven miles of dusty road to the abattoirs, where the killing takes place.

That this description may not rest on my un-

corroborated testimony, I summarise what appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of September 17th, 1909, as to what took place in the Home Bush Yards. Upwards of 70,000 head were advertised for sale.

"If the quality of the sheep and lambs as they are now leaving the pastures could be supplied to the meat consumers, the quality would be entirely satisfactory. The system of railway trucking and marketing, however, is severely out of joint with the times, and what should be choice eating meat is to a large degree sapless and flavourless."

Now there is only one unloading platform at Flemington railway station, alongside a narrow end of the sale-yards. On the Wednesday night most of the stock trains arrived ready for Thursday's sales. Late in the evening, however, the lights were turned out and no unloading could take place until morning came.

"The stoppages and shunting of the stock trains tend to jolt the sheep off their feet," says the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "The long journeys tire the sheep, and they are inclined to lie down. Whether down from either cause, the length of time taken before they can be unloaded, results in severe losses. On the unloading siding, and in the yards yesterday, there were several heaps of dead sheep that had been trodden to death. During yesterday six double horse vans were working continually, carting the carcases away to the boiling-down. It was estimated by the contractor that between 900 and 1,000 dead and crippled sheep

would be removed. The longer the stock were kept in the trucks the more the sheep went down by shunting or other causes, and the more there were smothered, many of them trodden out of recognition."

Such barbarous treatment is a disgrace to the Commonwealth. Nor, I regret to say, have I a word of praise as to the manner in which the carcases are treated after slaughter. In rough method they are conveyed in carts to the freezing works. There they are passed as fit for export. No attention, however, is paid to them between the time they leave the works and when they reach the ship's hold. They are conveyed in all sorts of weather and in all kinds of conditions to the ships. When being loaded, practically no steps are taken to keep an even temperature. The men have frequent rests and the doors are left open, so that the meat, being exposed to the atmosphere, is softened and discoloured; there is too much jamming, with the consequence that shanks are often broken. So it comes about that Australian mutton does not secure the same price in the London market as does mutton from elsewhere. As I have said, Australian mutton in Australia is exceedingly good. But the cause of its fetching the lowest price in England is entirely due to the carelessness with which the sheep are treated when alive, and the slipshod manner in which the meat is dealt with after death.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SETTLEMENT ON THE LAND

"One People working out one Destiny—
Shall we not live within the ample shores
Of our fair land, with no remembered sores
Of once-distempered blood; no enemy,
Nor speech nor hearts divided; earth, sea, sky
Our own; the coming Nation's plenteous stores
Of courage, richer than her golden ores,
Expanding with her fame and industry?"

HENRY PARKES.

THE time will surely come when mighty vessels, breasting the seas, will carry southwards from the old lands cargoes of brave human freight determined to settle on Australian lands, whilst other vessels beating northwards will be heavily laden with the grain which previous settlers have grown.

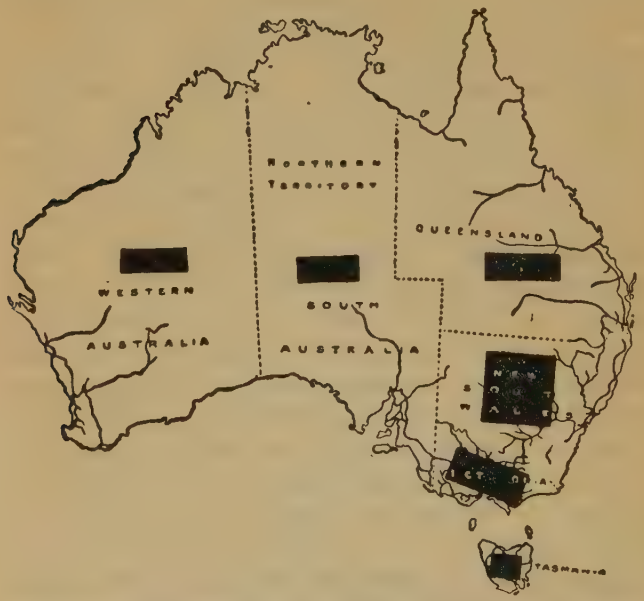
In my mind's eye I see the day when it will be possible to ride through innumerable miles of waving corn, when the only sound will be the rustling of the ears. In that future Australia will have millions of sturdy fellows devoting their energies to grain growing. They will be useful units in a productive family. But sometimes, when the evening comes and they rest after the heat of the day, they will recall the first settler. He was James Ruse, who now takes his long sleep in St. John's Churchyard, Campbelltown (N.S.W.). Writing to a Secretary

of State on June 17, 1790, Governor Phillip thus expressed himself in regard to an experiment which, at his suggestion, Ruse was then making: "In order to know in what time a man might be able to cultivate a sufficient quantity of ground to support himself, I last November ordered a hut to be built in a good position, an acre of ground to be cleared, and once turned up. It was put into the possession of a very industrious man, who was told that if he behaved himself well he should have thirty acres. . . . He has been industrious, has received some little assistance from time to time, and now tells me that if one acre more is cleared for him he shall be able to support himself after next January, which I much doubt, but think he will do tolerably well after he has been supported for eighteen months. Others may prove more intelligent, though they cannot well be more industrious."

Out of the public funds Ruse was supported until February 25, 1791, when he would not accept any further aid because he was then able to maintain himself, his wife and his child. The promised deed of grant of thirty acres was issued on February 22, 1792. The holding was known as "Experiment Farm," and "Experiment Cottage" stands, to this day, quite close to Harris Park railway station.

Now, throughout the Commonwealth you hear the cry in favour of closer settlement. Already I have referred to the manner in which the first comers found how suitable the climate was to sheep-rearing, and got possession of enormous areas. They were the best regions; but, comparatively

speaking, not far distant from the main centres of population, and there, naturally, railways have been developed. But there are great stretches of country capable of food production, which are at present




THE BLACK PATCHES SHOW THE LAND IN EACH STATE WHICH IS UNDER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP, AND SUPPOSING IT TO BE ALL COLLECTED INTO ONE LOCALITY, THE AREA ALIENATED IS 6½ PER CENT. OF THE WHOLE COMMONWEALTH. OVER 1,000,000,000 ACRES ARE YET UNOCCUPIED.

beyond commercial use because they are too far from a railway line.

It is easy to understand how men who are desirous to settle upon the land clamour for the breaking up of the big estates, so that they may be utilised by

farmers rather than be devoted to the feeding of sheep. Also, one can well appreciate why it is that pastoralists are resisting the proposal, either that the governments of the various States should seize their property at a price and split it up for agriculturists, or that there should be a system of land taxation, the main intention of which is to compel the big landowners to divide sections of their estates into agricultural holdings. The curious thing is that, whilst much is being written about large estates being sub-divided, when one descends to the bed-rock of facts, and studies the position of the Commonwealth agriculturally, it is found that instead of more land going under cultivation, it is really decreasing year by year. Here are some figures, taking different periods during the last ten years, which show how land—when the whole and not patches of the Commonwealth is viewed—is gradually going out of cultivation and being turned into grazing ground:

UNDER CULTIVATION.

| | |
|---|---|
| WHEAT. | |
| 1900–1: | 1907–8. |
| 5,666,614 acres. | 5,383,911 acres. |
| OATS. | |
| 1900–1. | 1907–8. |
| 12,043,310 bushels. | 9,185,227 bushels. |
| MAIZE. | |
| 1890–1. | 1907–8. |
| 300,990 acres. | 299,579 acres. |
| POTATOES. | |
| 1906–7. | 1907–8. |
| 146,681 acres. | 143,511 acres. |

| Hay: | |
|---|---|
| 1903–4: | 1907–8: |
| 1,853,864 acres: | 1,811,579 acres. |
| **Sugar Cane.** | |
| 1905–6: | 1907–8: |
| 155,912 acres. | 144,763 acres. |
| **Vines.** | |
| 1901–2: | 1907–8. |
| 64,577 acres. | 61,232 acres. |

The "sadness of the landscape" is a worn commonplace in Australia. The "native born" is tired of being told about it. He does not notice it.

Yet, no one with a touch of imagination can fail to be depressed by the sombreness of the land. I shall never forget my first weeks in Australia. It looked a weary land—conscious of its own shortcomings. It looked as though the Almighty had started to make a fine continent of it and left it half made. There were hills, but most were near the coast, so that the rivers, instead of running to the sea, ran inland. Rain was provided to make vegetation sprout with a luxuriant vigour unequalled in any part of the world; but every now and then Australia is forgotten by the rain, and years of drought follow. The birds were made beautiful—how delicious it was to see them, with their gorgeous rainbow plumages, flitting amongst the trees—but it was forgotten to provide most of them with song. Trees grew, but mostly of the eucalyptus family—the "eternal bluegum," as it is called—and you can journey days, weeks, and see nothing but the dark bluish foliage of the gums. The wood is hard, and most of the trees are gnarled. Some of them seem to shed their bark

in despair, and stand miserable. Few flowers have been given to Australia. Suddenly, however, you come across a blaze of wattle, ribbons of flaming gold, and the delight of the Australian, the rhapsody in which he or she indulges, at this splash of beauty in the sad landscape, is almost pathetic in its enthusiasm.

Few Australians will thank me for writing the preceding paragraph, because few of them have been to other lands, and they are consequently devoid of the sense of comparison. The belief they have in their own land is refreshing, for they cannot or they will not, believe that the physical aspects of other lands can be more attractive. The visitor who dares suggest such a thing is regarded as prejudiced. And I have listened to travelled Australians abused as wretched and unpatriotic creatures for presuming to say Australia has some defects.

Yet I think, if I were an Australian, instead of resenting the notice taken of harsh, hard, inhospitable stretches of the continent, I would find pride in the knowledge that men of my own race had gripped stubborn, niggardly Nature and forced her into well-doing. Of that the Australians have cause to be proud. It has something to do with them which the natural conditions have not.

When I motored through the "bush" and saw the tight-knit, repellent "gums," and then came to "clearings" with stretches of forest removed, the stumps with their earth-clinging fangs hauled away, and the wilderness turned into fruitful agricultural areas, I felt a glow of joy that it was men of British

breed who, fighting against odds and with many heart-aches, had wrestled their way to prosperity.

Not yet, but some day, Australians will come to realise that the finest thing in their history will be the tale of the courageous men and women who, during the early half of the nineteenth century, had the will to leave the old land, sail across the seas in indifferent vessels, come to a region which was little known, and, with bravery in both hands, begin the battle.

One evening, spinning in a motor-car along a broad and level road, my host said to me: "I first came this way as a baby in a bullock wagon. There was no road, and my father and my uncle had to cut down the trees so that the wagon could get along. It took them six weeks to cover the distance we now motor in an afternoon. As a child I lived for two years in that bullock cart, and I do not think that during that time my mother ever saw another woman."

He spoke simply, casually; for it was a common tale. But to my mind the story was an epic of endeavour.

That Australia is easily capable of carrying ten times the population it does now is admitted. Also it is accepted that the future welfare of the continent will depend on agricultural development. Yet the number of people living on the land is almost at a standstill. Seek for the explanation. One class will tell you that the Australian is a pleasure lover, tires of the hard life, and crushes into the towns. Another class will tell you that all the best land is

occupied, and that the curse of the country are the mighty sheep runs, covering millions of acres, which would be more productive if turned into agricultural land and would carry more people. So the cry is for "closer settlement."

The "squatter," the owner of sheep runs, is the most abused man in Australia. His forbears, in pioneering days, got swift possession of vast tracts of territory. What easier than to turn sheep out, breed, grow wool? So there came the wool and the mutton industry, the backbone of Australia's commerce. In the hard, dry years, when the land lay blistered, the small men were ruined and the richer men, struggling through, got cheap possession of the neighbouring "runs." The last seven or eight years have been splendid, plenty of rain and plenty of herbage. The price of wool has bounced, and the "squatters" are the richest men in the land. I had the pleasure of being a guest at several "stations" out on the downs, far removed from the railway. Charming hosts I found, with houses built after the manner of English country houses, and with all the accompanying luxuries—a delightful bit of "home" far from the "Old Country."

Now, agricultural labour is expensive and, at times, impossible to secure. There is a lot of human nature amongst "squatters," and it is not surprising that, doing so well with sheep, requiring only a few men to look after them, except at shearing times, when travelling gangs of shearers are employed, the "squatters" want to leave well alone instead of ploughing their land and growing wheat on a poor

soil—for though there are some fine productive patches, the average wheat yield on the continent is only nine bushels an acre. The "squatter" prefers to give an acre to sheep; it is easier than farming, and there are no labour worries.

That the best of these "runs" should be in the most favoured portions of the land, on hill slopes and near water, is just what might be expected. Indeed, they are declared to be the best sections of the country. So the politicians and the townspeople, who do not own land, cry out for the "runs" to be divided into farm lands. The tendency of legislation in the various States is to pile up taxes on land—an accelerated increase: the more the land, the higher the tax—and so squeeze the "squatter" into selling. This is being done, but with different results. In some parts the land is bought quickly, tilled, and gives employment to more persons than are occupied on a "run." In other parts these "squatters" have sliced their land and offered it at the market value, but there are few buyers.

But, generally speaking, viewing the whole area, there is a decided movement toward "closer settlement." Most of the State Governments have a right to acquire land compulsorily at a price fixed by arbitration. So "closer settlement" progresses.

When I inspected some of these regions I was impressed with the industry, the frugality, and the prosperity. Land is dear; much dearer than in any other colony for similar land. Farming is less intense than at home, but more scientific than in Canada. This because the soil is not so good as

that of Canada. All the more credit to those who are working it. There is the "mallee" country in Victoria, formerly a waste of bush. Many hearts must have been broken in conquering that bush, cutting it, clearing it, delving it. What men can do with a repellent land is demonstrated by what has been done in the "mallee."

Then there are waste areas, with apparently no virtue in them. These have been treated with superphosphates, so that comparatively little rain is required, and success has come. Giant irrigation schemes are working and projected. Dairy farming is prosperous, and an increasing quantity of butter is yearly exported. But none of the industries is so wealth-producing as sheep raising, and the "squatter" is crying out that the politician is killing the bird which lays the golden eggs.

The answer of the politicians is: "We want your land for people instead of sheep, and you can put your sheep into the 'back-blocks,' which are not suitable for growing foodstuffs."

For there is a belief that within the interior enough food can be got for sheep, and that, by boring, plenty of water for drinking can be secured. Scientists and geologists point to underground rivers, and cattle men have told me of their fortune in getting water, suitable for sheep, but on land not always suitable for irrigation.

So, very hesitatingly, the old idea that the interior is nothing but a sandy, waterless waste, is disappearing. That there are tremendous areas which are useless is true enough. Men who know

the country, however, declare that two-thirds of the continent is capable of good.

If Australia imagines she is going to draw the moneyed farmer whilst practically nothing is done to provide such a farmer with labourers, she is wrong. The European farmer with money is the most conservative man on the face of the earth, and he is not at all likely to leave his own country, to tear away from the shire of his fathers, in order to embark on a new style of farming, under conditions that will take him long to learn. The well-to-do farmer who may come to Australia is the young fellow with perhaps little experience at home and—unless he has exceptional ability—likely to come a cropper in the new land. As one who has studied this settlement question in other new countries, I am convinced that Australia will not secure the proper immigrant—poor, sturdy, brave—until free land can be offered.

"Oh, but free land is being found," I was told. "Settlements are being formed."

That is true. I visited one of them a few miles out of Geelong, in Victoria. I trust it was exceptional; but here is what I found. Fresh arrivals had been given plots of six or seven acres each. Not much. Rough shanties had been built, and most of them had no water supply unless it was collected rain or brought from a distant brook. Only one room was boarded inside, and in one house I could see daylight between the roof and the walls. One respectable man, a teetotaller, married, and with two children, told me

his experience very much in these words: "I come from Kent. I was told by the authorities of the Victorian Government in London that I would be given between sixty and seventy acres. I was shown pictures of a nice house in the middle of a farm, and told that was the sort of place the immigrants would have. We were brought out here. There was nothing but this hillside—not a stick on it. I expected we would have to rough it, but I did not expect it would be anything like it turned out to be. We were put into tents until houses could be built. We were told we would have to earn money, and we were given log-cutting to do. I earned 5s. a day, but the charges against me were more than 5s. a day for the keep of myself and family. At last a little wooden house was built. I was promised agricultural implements. In my mind that meant a plough and such like. But I was given only a shovel, a pick, and a crowbar. I was promised the use of a horse, but it was little good. I was promised a cow, which, of course, I would have to pay for by instalments. I was told that I would have to build the stables and shed myself, but wood would be provided. Only half a dozen planks were given me. The charges against me were about 7s. a week, but from where was I to get 7s. a week? I was told to go and work in Geelong. I did. I am strong, but there has been unemployment in Geelong. Other families were worse off, and starved—yes, sir, starved. If it had not been for the ladies and gentlemen of Geelong, I think some would have died. I've managed to get along, because some of my

friends at home sent me £15. I don't want to grumble, but this is not the kind of place I was told about by the Victorian officials in London."

It may have been I stumbled upon an unfortunate instance of immigrant settlement. But there it is. I made inquiries and the story was corroborated. Only I was told that there must have been a mistake in thinking sixty or seventy acres and a house were to be provided—that the aim was to find small plots near a town where the man could get work, the wife to look after the little farm, and so give the couple a chance. Let it go at that.

Yet what is the good of dumping a family on a hillside and telling the man to go and earn his living at Geelong, three or four miles away, so that he has to walk the distance twice a day?

When I probed into this matter from the official side I found that a sub-committee of the Victorian Cabinet stated in their report on the administration of the Small Holdings Act the following: "As the committee went amongst the people on the settlements it saw on all sides evidences of the downfall of the organisation. A short experience has proved that the Act does not properly embody the intentions Parliament had in view when passing it, nor were the conditions of settlement made as easy as was intended. Failure was accelerated by the attempt to do too much in a limited time, and by the effort to treat 250 men in different parts of the country merely as units of a great human machine, the lever of which was to be controlled in the public offices in Melbourne. Cumbersome methods, added

to the burden of the cost of official action in respect to the cultivation of the holdings, completed the wrecking of a humane national experiment. Almost absolute failure, with few redeeming features, is, to the committee's deep regret, the burden of this report, in which the ameliorative steps necessary to be taken to save the present settlers, and remedial and preventive action in the future is indicated."

In regard to the Geelong settlement, the Cabinet sub-committee found: "That the valuations of accredited men indicate that the land was purchased at a fair market value, yet when the sub-divisional charges, etc., are debited to the tenants, and the unsuitability of the allotments for small holdings purposes taken into account, the price becomes excessive, and is higher than should have been undertaken by the department. The tenants, with all these charges and other objections considered, are not getting value for their indebtedness, and the Government should give them some relief. That, viewed from the point of small holdings, such prices are not justified, and this estate should never have been purchased. The evidence discloses that, notwithstanding the extensive works now being carried out by the Geelong Harbour Trust, which will shortly be completed, the local labour market was over-supplied before the establishment of any of these small holdings, and an additional 78 men, together with their wage-earning children, have added to the difficulty of securing work. Unless something unforeseen takes place, there will be for many years a difficulty in these additional families

obtaining employment, and, in the opinion of the committee a grave error has been made in establishing so many workmen in this district. The cure for such a want of foresight is either to reduce the number of holdings or increase the acreage, and allow the tenants to entirely support themselves on the land."

All this does not reveal any lack of sympathy on the part of the Victorian Government. I was convinced that there is a very great desire to find means to settle families on convenient plots of land near towns. But it does show that sufficient care and expert knowledge had not been brought to bear in finding means to carry an excellent object into practice.

Each State, as I have shown, has its own plan for assisting those who are desirous to settle upon the land. Though there are criticisms concerning methods and details, there is agreement in principle. The sharp conflict comes when the proposal is made that land already held should be taken from its present owners and divided amongst others.

When we turn to Government statistics we find that an infinitesimal portion of the continent has been alienated to private ownership. The figures show that in New South Wales only 25.42 per cent. of the land is alienated or in process of alienation; in Queensland, 4.59; in South Australia, 2 per cent.; in Western Australia, 2.09; in Tasmania, 33.39 per cent., and in Victoria, 48.79 per cent. In all, the average of alienated land in the Commonwealth works out at 6½ per cent., so that the various

Governments have between them 93½ per cent. of the land still to settle.

What strikes the investigator is that so much of the present legislation is directed toward splitting up that 6½ per cent., whilst comparatively little is being done to place settlers on the 93½ per cent.

I know the answer. It is that, of the 93½ per cent. of the continent non-alienated, much is useless and the rest is too far away from a railway to be commercially serviceable; whilst the 6½ per cent. is acknowledged excellent soil and is within fairly easy reach of railways.

In some of the States, if not in all, the Government, who have re-purchased estates and are bursting them up for small ownership, are giving everybody a fair chance by having ballots for the occupancy of certain blocks. This is quite fair. It gives everyone who desires to take to agriculture an equal chance, and he becomes the occupier of a farm stretch and in time, by easy payments, the freeholder.

The system, however, excellent though it is in inception, does not always work out as fairly to the community as its proposers would like. In New South Wales I heard of men who entered repeatedly into what might be called a gamble for the land. They were always applying in the hope of being a lucky drawer. This did not mean they were prospective settlers. They applied whenever the opportunity came, in the hope that they would secure one of the best plots, and it is these repeated applications by the same men which has something

to do with the statement so frequently heard in New South Wales that there are thousands of people hungry to get upon the land. What such a gambler does, when he has been lucky in securing a valuable block, is to occupy it for a short period, and then dispose of it at considerable financial profit to himself.

In regard to this feature of the case, it was strikingly interesting to read a speech made by Mr. Wade, the Premier of New South Wales, that during five years 11,000,000 acres of crown lands had been alienated and 1,000,000 acres of privately-held land re-secured for sub-division, and yet the demand for closer settlement and sub-division was more insistent than ever. The providing of 12,000,000 acres of land for small holders was a fine thing to read about, for their development would require a considerable increase in population. As I knew that the agricultural population of the State had not been increasing to an enormous extent, it was necessary to make further inquiries. It was calculated that to turn those 12,000,000 acres into productivity would require about £50,000,000 and the employment of at least 115,000 men. Yet it is a fact that, althougn there has been an increase in the products, when one compares the end of the five years with the state of affairs at the beginning, the area under crop has fallen off by a quarter of a million acres from 1907 to 1908, and that in 1906 there was an even greater area cultivated than in 1908.

I confess I was somewhat nonplussed, though

the situation rather gave colour to the statement which so often came my way that a considerable proportion of the men who obtain sections are not very far removed from land speculators who are waiting for an increase in value.

A considerable authority on the land question asserted that the bulk of landholders in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia have been cutting up and selling their estates for the last ten to twenty years, and they are doing so now, especially in Victoria and in what is known as the Riverina District, where the demand is the greatest, thus placing a large quantity of land on the market. He insisted that at the present time there is more land offering, mainly in New South Wales, than there are men to buy it.

Personally, I recognise that the Governments are actuated by good political sense in endeavouring to secure land now held by squatters for sheep-raising, which would be more productive if handed over to farmers, than in expending millions upon millions of money constructing railways into the "back blocks," where settlers might not be inclined to go, and where the railways would be unable to secure a traffic which would pay for their maintenance.

It is to be remembered, however, that the land settlement policies, being largely devoted toward putting settlers on land already in occupancy, make it only possible for the men with at least some money to take up possession of a holding. It is to the "back blocks," where land is cheap or ought

to be given for nothing to the industrious settler, that greater energy should be directed, if the men in the older countries who have not been successful are to be attracted to the new land.

As things now are, largely due to the non-building of railways to open up fresh country, the value of land within what may be called the commercial areas has increased to an astounding extent.

None of us like to pay taxes. Therefore, it can be understood why the proposals made for imposing land taxes in Australia are strenuously resisted by the landholding classes. The answer of the men in the towns is that most of the State revenue is acquired by taxing the men in, or the goods which are imported into, the big towns, and that much of this money is now being devoted to buying out owners of large estates and in assisting settlers. The town men feel that, as it is chiefly their money which is being utilised for agricultural development, big agriculturists themselves should contribute more than they are doing at the present time toward the means which will lead to the ultimate benefit of the whole country.

For instance, the Government of New South Wales is this current year (1909-10) spending at least one and a half millions of money on the resumption of estates for closer settlement. The State, however, has to take the risk of having the poorer of the blocks into which the estates are cut up left on its hands, to be sold later on at a loss; or, if it gets a covering price, then the unfortunate

buyer may find himself overburdened. I heard that all along the railway, north of Newcastle, land cannot now be purchased from owners except at prices prohibitive to would-be buyers. The same thing obtains along both the Western and the South Western railway lines. I heard of one big estate where Government valuers fixed the price at £4 10s. an acre, but the owners demanded £7 15s. an acre, though afterwards they were willing to accept £7. Of course, there is denunciation of the cupidity of landowners.

All things considered—and I regard the matter as an outsider studying the question without any pecuniary interest in the settlement—it would be better if more attention were given to the development of Crown lands where the Government had not to deal with the private owner, who could be left to dispose of his estate as the market decided.

There is also this curious situation, that, as the Government is a purchaser, prices are raised, with the consequence that the man who has money and is anxious to settle has, in private bargain, often to pay a much higher price for the farm he desires than he would do if the general prices were not being forced up by the Government being in the market.

Therefore, the Government, with the best intentions in the world, is really benefiting private owners who have land to sell, and hindering men who have money with which to purchase farms.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE MIDDLE STATE

"On some fertile spot which we may call our own,
Where the rich verdure grows, we will build up a home,
There industry will flourish and content will smile,
While our children, rejoicing, will share in our toil."

OLD BUSH SONG.

IN dealing with the States of the Commonwealth, I choose first the least known and least advertised of them all—South Australia.

Here is an area seven times as large as that of the United Kingdom, with a population of only 400,000—not so much as that of a second-class city at home. Exclusive of what is known as the Northern Territory—something of a white elephant to South Australia—it has an area of near 250 millions of acres. Yet only just over 2¼ millions are under cultivation, or about 1 per cent.

It is a contrast like this which is so startling to the investigator. First think of the millions of good but unproductive acres awaiting man. That there are sweeps of land, wild waste, sandy and waterless, is true. But it is not all so. The population is a handful, prosperity is undoubted. Yet people are shy to settle, and the miserable inter-State jealousy, which is so lamentable a feature of public life in Australia—though, of course, it is always "the

other States which are jealous of us"—bars appreciation by neighbouring States.

Well, I stint nothing in my admiration of what the folk of South Australia have done.

"Oh," I was told elsewhere, "South Australia is no good because it has a deficient rainfall."

It is because of this lack of moisture—though there was no cause for grumbling on this score last season (1909)—and the determination of the people to turn an arid region into agricultural well-doing, that South Australia is one of the wonders of the world.

Go to untouched areas, parched, with turfy, rank, bleached grass. As the glare of the desert hits you and cracks the skin of your cheek, you feel it is an accursed place to be avoided. Then you and your friends give heel to your horses, and away you scamper to another stretch, green, fruitful, joyous with productiveness. The thing to recall and never forget is that this smiling plain was a scowling, scorched plain till the South Australians changed the face of it. Science, fertilising with superphosphates, irrigation, dry farming, has done it all. Dry farming, which is chiefly deep ploughing, so that the moisture is better retained, has worked much. I was told of extraordinary yields of wheat on what, a year or two before, had been a semi-arid plain. Exceptions, however, are never a guide. Averages must be struck, and the wheat return per acre is undoubtedly much lower than in Victoria or New South Wales. Land, however, is cheaper in South Australia than in the eastern States, and

the working of it is not so costly; so that, as an expert put before me, a yield of seven bushels in South Australia is financially as satisfactory as one of fifteen bushels in New South Wales or twenty bushels in New Zealand.

When Queen Victoria ascended the throne there were four hundred people in this State. Those four hundred have since been multiplied a thousandfold. Few of them were rich settlers; most were rough men, with little money, but valiant hearts. They have spent over £4,000,000 in building reservoirs and providing distributing channels. Over four thousand square miles are to-day benefited by the reservoirs. It is only by jerking back to mind the heartaches which must have come to the early settlers, the droughts, with no sluices of water to loosen, and keeping in the eye of thought that even to-day the population is tiny, that one begins glimmeringly to comprehend what has been done.

Adelaide, the parent city, is one of the most charming towns I have ever been in. Pleasantly built, wide streeted, it has some two thousand acres of green, known as park lands, dedicated for all time to the public and provided for in the old days by Colonel Light, who brought the design of laying out the city from India. Adelaide is not yet in need of "lungs," as the London parks are called. But the time will come when these open spaces will be a blessing to Adelaide, as to-day they are a delight. The background is a heave of hills, sometimes grey, sometimes dark green with olive plantations, sometimes patched with the lighter green of orange

groves. To look from Mount Lofty, as I have done, upon the sweet white city of Adelaide is to see a picture full of beauty.

The Botanical Gardens are radiant with blooms. There are statues to men who did much for South Australia. The public buildings are worthy, without ostentation. The private life of the citizens represents all the best we know at home. It was my pleasure, during far too brief a stay, to be a guest each day at some private residence. Those visits leave a delicious memory.

There was one thing to which I may allude: I came to the conclusion that for its size—and, of course, I write in general terms and put on one side the university centres at home—Adelaide is the best educated town I have ever been in. In another chapter I deal with South Australia's place in the Commonwealth scheme of education. But here, writing of its capital, I can say I was impressed again and again with the culture of the people. I have mentioned the Botanical Gardens. Then there is the Zoo. The Public Library is well managed, and I noted the fine endeavours being made to bring together the records, some still in manuscript, of the early days of the State. The Art Gallery contains good pictures—and some others—presented by worthy citizens. A really fine building is the University—the first university in Australia to grant degrees to women. The University devotes much of its work to preparing students for a commercial career. There is a Conservatorium of Music and a School of Design and Technical Art. The School of

Mines and Industries is thought to be the first institution of its kind in the Commonwealth. I will go much further than that, and say it is one of the best equipped colleges in the world. Here, and in all the places I went to, I saw a healthy, generous, broad-minded, public spirit. Remember, Adelaide has a population of only 165,000.

The "Nile of Australia" is the name given to the River Murray. The waters come down with swirling rush, leap the banks, and, when the floods go, a rich deposit of earth is left. There have been many of these inundations. But Nature is irregular. Years come, and there is no flooding. There is little rain. Vast expanses of soil, which need but a moist kiss, lie dead through long years. When the water comes and then recedes, the land blossoms; but not with growths specially suitable to man. I see the day not far off, however, when the waters of the Murray will be locked and conserved, and great will be the advantage to the land.

Few people have heard of Renmark. I confess I never heard of it till I read something written by Mr. David J. Gordon, one of the best journalists Australia has produced. Well, in 1887, a man marked out a block of uncleared land on the Murray side which he thought was suitable for fruit growing. To-day there are 1,200 people, only a village—but in 1908 they raised fruit to the value of over £80,000: apricots, peaches, oranges, grapes, olives, apples, and pears. The township covers less than 4,500 acres, and the lands are assessed at £150,000. And only yesterday, as it were, the site of Renmark

was wind-swept sand, with scrub and tough grass struggling for life. Man's labour, scientific treatment, and irrigation have been the magic. You will not find Renmark on an ordinary map; it is but a pin-point of a place on the Australian continent. It is an example. The Australians have found the Aladdin's lamp which will bring to them the sparkling jewels of prosperity. It is called irrigation.

Though the tilled land in South Australia is trifling compared with the acreage of the whole, the State cultivates fully one-third of the land now under cultivation in all the Commonwealth. So, wherever one turns, the possibilities are enormous, and a sigh escapes that so few men are engaged in the development.

Sufficient for the present it is to see what has been accomplished, and, in the spirit of goodwill, take that as fair evidence of what is going to be done in the future. Railways, agricultural colleges, roads, bridges, irrigation, the sinking of artesian wells, the purchase of big grass tracts, hitherto given to sheep, and slicing them into smaller blocks suitable for mixed farming—millions and millions of money are being spent.

From where does the South Australian Government get the money? It borrows it. The public debt is enormous.

So it might be said of all these Australasian communities—particularly New Zealand, which is rapidly moving to the point where the problem will be how to raise sufficient money to pay the interest

on the borrowed money, far less the debt itself. That is an outlook causing the sensible people of New Zealand to think deeply and long. There is much to be written on the unwisdom of a young state, in its eagerness to bound ahead, shackling itself with debts which in time may impede it from reaching the goal it has in view. Australia, during late years, has been blessed with fat seasons. She feels her strength. The States are too impetuous to wait till they can develop out of revenue. They borrow with all the ardour of youth, and, with a beautiful optimism, work out sums to prove that the loan and the interest can be repaid easily and a fine balance left in the pocket. But the best-laid plans "aft gang agley," and the "Oh, we are reducing our debt," which is heard in these flourishing days, might be turned into, "How are we to raise money?" if Australia were again blanketed with several years of shrivelling drought.

I point out a possibility which is a platitude, though I accept the Australians' reminder—their debts are represented by reproductive public works, and have not been accumulated by unproductive wars; and, further, that the calamity mentioned loses its terrors as years go, for the works, reservation of water, canaling, dry farming, the sinking of artesian wells, will all help in tiding over the drought period which in times past blighted the land of life and hope.

If I were a settler in South Australia, and given my choice of occupation, I would become a wine-grower. The climate is that of Italy. There are

sunny, protected hill slopes, which are specially suitable for vine culture.

One day I was motoring out to view a vineyard, and I said to my host: "What kind of soil do you grow on?"

"The very best," he replied, whereas most vines flourish on a poorish soil.

"What wines do you prepare?" I further asked.

"All sorts—burgundy, hock, claret, chablis, port, sherry," was the answer. I had to laugh. Here, in South Australia, as I remember in California, with slopes specially suitable for vineyards, I found enthusiasm without much thought.

The Australian has yet to learn that the quality and tone of a wine is almost as much dependent on the soil as on the vine from which the grape is plucked. The consequence is that Australian wines are being labelled with the names of well-known French vintages; but they are not like the original, and cause disappointment to the taste of a man who does know the real article. The planting of vines on inappropriate ground too often leads, whilst producing a rich and honest wine, to supplying one that is harsh to the palate. Also, the rushing of the local wines upon the market before they have matured has much to do with these Colonial wines failing to find favour with connoisseurs. That there is a future for viticulture there can be no doubt, if growers are more careful in the selection of slopes, and if the wine is cellared longer before it is given to the public. Even at the present time—by accident, I fancy, rather than by design—little vintages are

produced with as excellent a bouquet as some of the famous French wines. Lunching one day with a retired judge, near Melbourne, I had the opportunity of drinking a light white wine, from the banks of the Murray River, which was as daintily generous as any wine I have tasted drawn from famous châteaux in France.

South Australia is not one of the boomed States. Yet, since white folk settled, the Colony has had a trade of over 600 millions of money. To-day its yearly trade is something like 26 millions. And the land has been but scraped.

But there is a contradiction which the inquirer notices. He rides through wealthy lands, cleared of "bush," and now given to the feeding of sheep.

"Excellent!" he exclaims, and asks: "Is there much of such land?"

"Millions upon millions of acres," is the lively answer.

That being so, the inquirer begins to ask why there is so strong a movement to tax squatters, owning giant areas for sheep rearing, to such an extent that these squatters are being compelled to split up their estates, and sell portions for general agricultural purposes?

Preaching the need of population in Australia, I understand that, if all the best land is given to sheep grazing, it might be well if an acre did something more than feed a sheep for a year. If you hint to an Australian that perhaps the eyes of the land have already been picked he repudiates the suggestion. Then he says it is impossible to get people on the

land until the big sheep runs have been split up. In the next breath he tells you that the fine feeding country you are looking upon is but an example of untold areas. What the dull Briton finds hard to comprehend is why, if there are these millions of acres ready to be made fruitful, as I believe there are, there should be this frenzy to dispossess squatters of their estates? Of course, I know the argument, dinned into my ears hundreds of times by townsmen: These squatters got their land for next to nothing in the old days; sheep are prolific, and in a happy climate need no looking after. But in their early days, or, at any rate, in the days of their fathers, the pioneers, there were hardships to be faced and conquered. And bearing in mind the insistence of the Australian that the eyes of the country have not been picked out, that there is just as good land in the interior as there is on the coast, I asked, and never got an answer: "Why does not the present-day young Australian, who wants to go on the land, push into the interior, where land can be obtained for next to nothing, and battle with troubles as the present squatters and their forefathers have done?"

When I did not get an answer, I found dancing in my mind another question, which I could not put: "Is the young Australian of to-day lacking that fine physical valour which the original pioneers showed, and does he really want to get easily, through politicians, what the men who first settled in South Australia got with daring, courage, and hard work?"

# CHAPTER X

## THE PROBLEM OF THE RAILWAYS

"For time means tucker, and tramp you must, where the scrubs and plains are wide,
With seldom a track that a man can trust, or a mountain peak to guide;
All day long in the dust and heat—when summer is on the track—
With stinted stomachs and blistered feet, they carry their swags Out Back."

HENRY LAWSON.

As I have remarked in a previous chapter, the policy of Australia in regard to railways is different from that pursued by any other people owning a region ready for development and desiring to secure settlers.

In the Argentine, in Canada, in South Africa, even in Siberia, the first steps taken are to throw railway tracks out into productive territory, knowing that the population will follow along the way and put the agricultural possibilities of the land to the test. That population follows railways is an axiom accepted in all parts of the world, except in Australia. The general attitude of the governing powers in the Commonwealth is only to provide railways where they are needed by the population.

I am well aware of the sharp conflict of opinion there is in Australia concerning railway development; indeed, I have more than a suspicion that

the furtherance of railway building depends upon political rather than economic considerations. Men are as keenly divided in their opinions on railway construction as are men in England on the rival merits or demerits of Tariff Reform and Free Trade. As an outsider, it was impossible not to recognise that if Australia is desirous of carrying a larger and wider-spread population than she has at present, she must go in for a great scheme of further railway building.

At present the majority of the 14,658 miles of lines in the Commonwealth are crushed down in the south-east corner. Since the federation took place, in 1901, there have only been built 260⅛ miles. Here are the annual average increases for the various States: New South Wales, 78⅜ miles; Victoria, 19⅞ miles; Queensland, 69¾ miles; South Australia, 17⅝ miles; Western Australia, 73½ miles; Tasmania, ¾ mile, and the Northern Territory, nil. Now, as these railways are Government-owned, it can be well understood why there is hesitation to build into uninhabited regions, and why, when construction does take place, it is in those parts of a State where population already exists. The taxpayer has to find the money; naturally, he wants the railway to come near him. He objects to his money being spent to open up an area which may be productive to the continent, but is not going to be of any direct advantage to himself.

Politicians are dependent in Australia, as elsewhere, upon the popular vote, and therefore the present situation is just what might be expected.

You will not get the Australian politician to admit that his attitude on the provision of fresh railways is decided by political considerations. He usually argues that it is better to lay lines through those areas which are fit for closer settlement, mixed farming rather than sheep stations, and so give an opportunity to the agriculturist to get his produce to the great centres of distribution quicker than he is able to at present. It may be said that the governments of the various States believe that this policy, which they know will give satisfaction, and which has in it a large probability of being financially successful, is a better one than that of pouring millions into parts of the continent which may become prosperous, but which may not. Anyway, all governments have to remember that they are dependent upon the votes of the electors, and the tendency is to conciliate them, whilst not denying it would be a good thing if money could be secured to open up further territory.

Be it right or wrong, it must be accepted that the majority of the people of Australia are in favour of Government-owned railways rather than railways in private ownership. The Australian takes satisfaction that no money goes into the pockets of shareholders. He is just a little disposed to forget that his country has borrowed from the British investor something like £140,000,000 for railway building, and that the British investor gets his rate of interest, which the Australian has to pay. The only difference is that the British investor in a Government-owned Australian railway is sure of his percentage,

whether the railway pays or not, whereas the investor in a private-owned railway may get his percentage or he may lose all his money by the failure of the line.

The construction of railways in Australia is extremely expensive—more expensive than in any other part of the world. This is chiefly due to the shortage of labour. The little line between Sydney and Parramatta, built in 1855, when labour was scarce, cost £50,000 a mile, whilst in other parts of New South Wales the cost of construction has gone as high as £13,156 per mile, although in Western Australia the cost has been brought down as low as £5,524.

Viewing all the railways in the Commonwealth, and balancing those that are successful against those which are non-successful, it must be admitted that at present there is a margin of profit. It should not be forgotten, however, that for many years they were failures, and, therefore, setting the good years against the bad years, and considering the railways of Australia in a purely commercial light, they have not been successful. This being so, it can well be understood why there is hesitancy about spending more money.

I am of opinion that if the various State Governments, which run their railways independently of each other, desired to embark upon fresh schemes to open up their country, they would not find the Englishman, with money to spare, quite so ready to invest it in Australia. First of all, there is the growing suspicion amongst British investors that

the trend of Labour legislation in the States individually, and in the Commonwealth as a whole, will ultimately be inimical to their interests. Further, the guarantee for the oversea investor lay in the Customs. The Customs, however, have been transferred to the Commonwealth. Although a certain proportion of the money raised by Customs is to be given back to the States, the Commonwealth practically has control of this money; but the Commonwealth has no control whatever over the railways. Therefore, even if there suddenly blazed the intention, on the part of the States, further to develop their country, they would find not a little difficulty in borrowing money at cheap rates.*

Yet everybody in Australia agrees on the value of railways. The State Governments hesitate, while the mass of the people are certainly antagonistic to privately-owned lines. Quite frankly, I believe the Australians in this respect are on the wrong tack. Admitting, if they like, that grave evils have arisen on the American continent as a

* The return of Customs money to the States is one of the most difficult and tangled issues of the present position of affairs. As a matter of constitutional fact it is provided that a "certain proportion," actually three-quarters, is to go back only till 1910 "or until such time as Parliament (the Commonwealth) shall otherwise arrange." That means that the Commonwealth Parliament has the power to take the lot, and the Labour Party, now in office, contend that the Commonwealth needs it all, and should take it, so as to make the States increase their land taxation. Anyway, it may be accepted as quite certain that the States will have to be content in the near future with a very small portion of the Customs revenue. This is of immense importance to the British investor who will be losing the greater part of his original security.

consequence of private lines, they could, at any rate, learn wisdom from those examples and make provision that no such evils should occur in their land. I fail to see how Australia, with so many public works to be effected, will be able to go ahead in the manner which she desires, and deserves, until she gives the capitalists, the speculators, the investors of the great money countries of the world, an opportunity of coming in and taking their chance of making money.

Here is the situation. You can easily pick a piece of Australia as big as all England in which there is not a yard of railway line. You will be told that it is a good stretch and is capable of carrying a large population. No farming settlers will go there because there is not the means to get their produce to the markets. Sheep may be browsing in that area, but the country is more suitable for mixed farming than for sheep. As there are practically no people living there, no political pressure can be exerted on members of the local parliament for a line to be constructed. The parts of the country which have population would cry out in protest against their money being spent in opening up new land. But a private company would be willing to speculate. Such a company, however, would probably demand land grants, and the Australian shrinks from giving land to a private company.

At any rate, that land is not of any advantage to the State at present. It would be of advantage to the company. It would be to the interests of the company that people settled. The settlers would

not only make money out of their agriculture, but they would want to purchase things produced by Australia in other parts. The adjoining sections, remaining in the hands of the Government, hundreds of thousands of square miles which at present have no population, would be occupied. The Government would get far better prices for that land than they can possibly get at the present time. Every family settled in Australia means hundreds of pounds addition to the wealth of the country. Therefore, whilst it is true enough that the shareholder in a private company would benefit—he would not put his money into the country unless he hoped to get an advantage—the whole of that district would become fruitful, and Australia would reap the result of the prosperity.

That there is a sullen rather than an outspoken antagonism between the State Governments and the Federal Government is undoubted. The State Governments have a shrewd fear that, as time progresses, they will be clipped of much of their power, which will be transferred to the Federal authorities. So they cling to their own land laws rather than have a uniform scheme of settlement throughout the Commonwealth. There is much to be said in favour of this, because conditions are vastly different in the various parts of the Commonwealth. The States are holding tight to the control of the railways within their borders, and beat back any proposal that all the railway systems in Australia should be federalised. Yet no man, who is not short-sighted, can fail to see that the federalisation of the Govern-

ment railways in Australia is inevitable. The present lines were constructed with as little consideration for the benefit of the whole of the continent as a railway in Finland would be built with consideration for the benefit of Italy. It is easy to be wise after the event, and to point out how, when the various States started building their lines, they could have adopted a common gauge. In all fairness, however, it should be remembered that the beginning of railways was in the days when the States were absolutely separate and antagonistic to each other, when it was almost beyond imagination that the time would come when it would be to the commercial interests of the land to have the same width between the metals.

At present, Victoria and South Australia have a gauge of 5 ft. 3 in.* ; New South Wales, 4 ft. 8½ in. ; Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, gauges of 3 ft. 6 in. On the light railways of Victoria it is 2 ft. 6 in., and on the light railways of Tasmania only 2 ft.

It is easy to imagine the inconvenience this causes. Ordinary passengers have to change trains when they cross the borders from one State to another, as from New South Wales to Victoria. They have to change again if they are going from New South Wales into Queensland. There are enormous delays, with the consequence that to go from Bris-

* Away from the main and Adelaide suburban lines the South Australian gauge is 3 ft. 6 in. To go to Broken Hill, for instance, the traveller must change trains from the broad to the narrow gauge, when he has gone less than half way.

bane to Adelaide, a distance of 1,000 miles, takes over three days.

Think of the extra cost to the commercial community in the transfer of goods from the New South Wales to the Victorian system. Live stock costs 3s. a truck extra to transfer, and general merchandise costs 3s. 6d. extra per ton.

There is much talk nowadays of the position of Australia if ever Great Britain came into bloody conflict with some other Power. If an attempt were made by our enemies to invade Australia, how terrible would be the confusion in conveying troops or armaments over lines of different gauges. There is general admission, except in regard to light railways, that there should be a uniformity of gauge. New South Wales will not alter for the convenience of Victoria and South Australia, and neither of these is likely to go to the expense of altering so that a through train may be run from Melbourne to Sydney.

If one must search out the original offender, it is New South Wales. When railways were first constructed there, the Government decided upon a gauge of 5 ft. 3 in. Victoria began to build on the same gauge, and when she had made a good start, the New South Wales Government changed its mind, and brought down the gauge to 4 ft. 8½ in. If only to secure standardisation of gauge, and so facilitate the carrying of merchandise, federalisation is absolutely necessary. I appreciate the advantage of cheap light railways as feeders to main lines, but that there should be the same gauge on all the

main ways throughout the continent surely cannot be disputed.

That the present confusion of system is detrimental, pastoralists, agriculturists and traders generally will not deny. As there is no competition, there is no choice of routes, and the State Government does much as it likes. In my chapter on the wool industry, I narrated an instance of the suffering which was often inflicted upon the sheep. This was by no means a solitary instance. I read in a paper of a mob of 2,600 sheep sent in New South Wales from Collarendabri to Muswellbrook, being kept waiting over three weeks, almost on the verge of starvation. Finally, owing to there being no water at Collarendabri terminus, they were kept 36 hours without a drink before entering the trucks, when they had to go another 48 hours waterless. The consequence was that the poor beasts overgorged themselves, when at length water and grass were available, so that 1,300 of them died.

As political influence is always strongest where the population is greatest—strongest at Sydney, at Melbourne, at Adelaide, at Brisbane, and at Perth—the Governments of the day, to win support, have converged the lines in the States upon these various places—to their benefit, truly, but to the disadvantage of other places and the undoubted crippling of business.

At certain periods of the year a great rush of business comes in conveying wool, live sheep and mutton. Instead of having various exits for export, the aim seems to be to force all the goods out of

one door in each State. So there is congestion, there is delay, there is damage, and there is loss of money. Few coasts in the world have such magnificent natural harbours as Australia. These ought to be utilised. For what should be in the minds of all good Australians, is the success of their country as a whole rather than the advantage of any one particular part.

This, however, is a counsel of perfection. Just as one particular town in a State grabs for all the import and export trade, to the detriment of other places which ought to have their share, so, on the larger question of linking up Western Australia with the Eastern States, and the Northern Territory with South Australia, State rivalry and State jealousy are unfortunately playing a bigger part than ought to be revealed if the States had the true interests of the Commonwealth at heart.

On an earlier page I have described how Western Australia is as much cut off from the Eastern States as though it were an island, because there is no railway connection. A survey has been made, and experts who know the country well, whilst not denying there are unpleasant stretches, make it clear that it would be profitable to join Adelaide with Perth. If this is done, it will have to be done with Commonwealth money. There is much shouting, however, in New South Wales and Queensland against gold being taken out of the common purse and their purse for the development of a tract of country in which they are not at all interested.

If you had talked to an Australian, say a Queens-

lander or a man of New South Wales, a year or two ago about the powers of Australia, he would have waxed eloquent over the disappearance of the so-called desert region, and told you that practically the whole of the land hitherto regarded as desert was capable of cultivation. The proposal has come along that a railway be run clean through from south to north, the whole length of the continent, from Adelaide to Port Darwin, by constructing a way between Oodnadatta and Pine Creek. The man of South Australia will be tremendously enthusiastic. He will quote authorities and give you suggestions to show you that, if only a line ran straight northwards, one of the finest areas in the world would be opened up. But now talk to a Queenslander or a man of New South Wales, and they will tell you that the central part of Australia is nothing but a desert, a horrible place. There is not a tree in sight, not a blade of grass, they say, and it would be like pouring money into the sea to construct a railway in that region. Further, the Queenslander, who has a plan of his own, will say: "Run a railway from Port Darwin in the north, but take it eastwards, and let it come south through Queensland." The New South Wales man will also have a plan, whereby the railway shall miss the abhorrent central parts and benefit his State.

Is not all this rather absurd? When are the Australians going to rid themselves of their parochialisms and consider in a broad, statesmanlike way what should be done for the awakening of all Aus-

tralia into fruitfulness? They should recognise that in a Commonwealth all sections of the community gain advantage from the prosperity of any part, instead of persisting in regarding these great problems from the standpoint of how it is going to benefit their own back garden.

The cost of travelling in Australia is much lower than it is in Great Britain. I heard many an Australian grumble to me about the slowness and the inefficiency of the railway service. And not infrequent complaints were made about the dirtiness of the carriages. Well, the trains do not travel fast, but on the main lines, instead of being disappointed, I was impressed with the excellent accommodation. When it is borne in mind how new the country is, and what has been done, it must be said that on the big express trains there is as comfortable travelling as can be found in most lands. On the side lines, however, my experience was not so favourable. For the carriages were not always attractive and the travelling was invariably at a dawdling pace. But the same thing can be said of England. There is much inconvenience caused by the failure to link up the lines of different States at various points. A State will run its line to within a few miles of its border and then stop, ending nowhere. The adjoining State will do likewise. Surely some arrangement ought to have been made to join them? Then, although the railways are Government-owned, the freight charges are much higher than in the United States, where they are privately owned, and where, of course, there is competition. The average freight

charge for all goods on the Chicago-New York railways is ¼d. per ton per mile, while on the State-owned railways of New South Wales it is 1.62d., or more than six times as high. And in the valley of the Hunter River, where production is greater than in any other part of the Commonwealth, and the population denser, the average freight charges are more than ten times as high as on the Chicago-New York lines. Chilled meat is carried on the railways of the United States from Chicago to New York, something like 1,000 miles, at a rate which leaves a profit to the producer, while in New South Wales the charges for a similar service, from Aberdeen to Sydney, over about 180 miles of the most thickly populated part of the Commonwealth, are so high and the delivery so slow that it is impossible to send country-killed beef or mutton to Sydney.

It will be seen how progress in the advancement of Australia is joined up with the problem of the railway. Australia must have more railways, or her plans to attract immigrants into the country will only lead to a further congestion in the great towns.

Whether Australia will cling to her present system of State-owned lines, or will follow the example of the Argentine, Canada and the United States, by allowing skilled and experienced railway managers to come in, with millions provided by the British investor, to arouse those tracks which are at present sleeping, is, of course, for the Australians themselves to decide. Anyway, it is necessary that they think less about their local interests and a little more about their national welfare.

# CHAPTER XI

## HOME LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

"We are common men, with the faults of most, and a few that ourselves have grown,
With the good traits, too, of the common herd, and some more that are all our own;
We have done great deeds in our direst needs in the horrors of burning drought,
And at mateship's call have been true through all to the death with the Furthest Out."

EDWARD DYSON.

THE Australians take pride that in their land there are not the social distinctions which mark the older lands. They have not much of a wealthy leisured class at one end of the scale, nor anything of a class of poor, cringing, wretched mortals at the other.

There is a closer uniformity of prosperity in Australia than in any other country. So far all Australians are unanimous in opinion. It is only when they come to size each other up that the porcupine quills are upraised. The number of times I was taken on one side in Melbourne, and asked my opinion of Sydney and its inhabitants, was only equalled by the number of times I was taken on the other side in Sydney and invited to reveal my inmost thoughts about the folk of Melbourne.

It was necessary to fence because, from a purely personal point of view, they were equally gracious.

But if I am to be forced into giving a judgment, it is this: Sydney is a more beautiful town than Melbourne. But the Melbourne business man—though his town must be content with second position as a commercial capital—is quicker than the Sydney man. Even in his walk he gets over four miles to the Sydney man's three. As to the women, the ladies of Sydney have more grace of manner, though the Melbourne ladies have more style in costume.

Both cities have public buildings worthy of any town in the world. Melbourne, however, has disfigured itself with the ugliest railway station I have ever had the misfortune to see—Flinders Street Central Station. Its colouring is a hideous combination of red and yellow. Besides, it is a foolish fraud. It has an expansive front; beyond the front the platforms are partially exposed, and in wet and windy weather exceedingly disagreeable. It looks a colossal station; but it is so narrow and inadequate that there is not accommodation to meet the growing suburban traffic. In my walk I made a careful examination of this station which Melbourne people admire. In front it is red brick; but on the river side more than half the structure is covered with tin painted red to look like brick—an unpardonable piece of architectural bunkum. How the Melbourne people, who have genuine artistic instincts, shown by the many artists born amongst them, could have allowed such an eyesore to be constructed, was and will long be a wonder to at least one visitor.

On the other hand, though I have seen most of the show places of the world, there are no public

gardens anywhere comparable in brilliant variety with the Botanical Garden at Melbourne. It lacks the soft shades of Kensington Gardens, and the gentle blend of colours which distinguishes the flower-beds of Hyde Park in the season. Nor are there the inviting, semi-wild bits such as you find near the lakes in St. James's Park and Regent's Park. It is more garish, bright, dazzling. But of varieties of trees and blossoming shrubs, revealing care in planting and genius in horticulture, no other park can show such an infinite collection. And it is pleasant to the eye to see whole families camped under the shade of heavily umbrageous trees, the women and girls in white frocks and the men and boys in flannels, spending happy times.

Parts of the year are semi-tropical, and the heat strikes like a furnace upon the streets of the great cities. It is particularly so in Queensland, where the rich, languorous, ripening climate draws the people into long, slim individuals, a little languorous themselves, and toning down the voice to a pleasant drawl, whilst the women, particularly, have the prettiness of hot-house plants.

The manner in which Australians, however, cling to the habits of their British ancestors is not without its amusing side. Christmas with them is about the hottest time of the year—steamy, clammy, with the grass sun-burnt to the hue of hay. Yet on December 25th they stuff themselves with turkey and plum-pudding, excellent no doubt in our clime, but scarcely suitable to a temperature of 110 in the shade. Then, although the majority of private

houses are quite well-built—if generally disfigured with tin roofs—and shady balconies are provided, there is no endeavour at all in the principal buildings of the main streets to do other than produce replicas of English or American structures. The consequence is that with the wide, shadeless streets—for instance, Collins Street, Melbourne, regarded as the principal street in the Commonwealth—and the solid stone buildings, there is an uncomfortableness and stiffness which, with a little more sense of adaptability, might well be avoided.

Frequently I heard it passed as a criticism that the companionable English home life, which we hold so dear, is non-existent in Australia. Personally I would be surprised if it did exist. The English home life is not due to any special virtues in our possession, but to the fact that our weather is treacherous, our winters cold and the dark evenings long. So we are naturally dependent upon the home for our amusement. There has grown up a friendliness amongst members of English families, a mutual reliance to provide pleasure, that is not necessary in Australia. There is no need to stay within doors. When business is over, nothing is more natural than to escape into the open, especially if the heat of the day has been spent in some sweltering office. Again, it is natural that young people should gravitate towards each other for boating parties, lawn tennis, croquet, picnics, outdoor life, as much as possible. Human nature being what it is, and the attractions of the open so inviting in a sultry land, and wintry nights—when most of us

do our reading—being entirely absent, it is not to be wondered at that Australians are a pleasure-loving folk, and that amongst the younger generation, at any rate, there is a disinclination to read what may be described as solid books.

It therefore follows that the appalling ignorance amongst the young men and women of Australia jars on the nerves. It is the privilege of ignorant people to be dogmatic. The dogmatic cocksureness and overweening conceit of the average young Australian is something to make one alternately sorrow and laugh. He has not been to other countries; his knowledge of geography is hazy to ludicrousness; he decides, without any knowledge at all, that other countries are "rotten places." He does not want to know about other lands. Australia is the finest place on earth, and that is sufficient for him. There are plenty of exceptions to this; but what I say has been corroborated in my hearing by many travelled and cultured Australians themselves.

This leads me to another phase of character exemplified by the inter-State jealousy to which I have more than once alluded. The Australians have got so much of which they have full cause to be proud, that it is sad such jealousy should be apparent. It runs right through the gamut of their relationship with each other and their concern with the rest of the world. Split municipalities are the rule in Australia. A town grows, and a municipality is formed. Then the south end of the town becomes jealous of the north end; there is a breaking away, and a new mayor and town council are set up and a

nasty rivalry prevails. So, all over the continent you get clusters of separate municipalities, too small to do anything effective, but their dislike too pronounced to recognise the merits of amalgamation. You get this between different quarters of the same town. The manner in which different towns sneer at the claims of each other is notorious. Then, too, the way in which the States take delight in depreciating one another is lamentable. Thus you move up step by step till you reach the point where Australia, as a whole, has something like contempt for the rest of the world, except perhaps the United States. England is "the cold land," and London is "the great fog"—and that summarises the knowledge a good many hundred thousand Australians have of the land from which their fathers came.

Let me give a few examples of the things I heard, which skip to memory as I write. One of the best-known men in Australia said to me: "Great Britain will never do any good in the world till the people are given free education." When I told him we have had free education in Scotland since the time of John Knox, and free education in the public elementary schools of England for the last twenty years, he showed hesitancy to believe it, and escaped with the remark: "Well, I never heard of it"—which was more the pity.

"What do you think of Melbourne?" was an inquiry addressed to me whilst I was in that city. I said I liked it, and gave several reasons why.

"I suppose you've never seen any better city in

all your travels?" Oh, well, in fairness to other places I could not say that.

"What place?" Oh, London!—at a shot.

"What is there better in London than in Melbourne?" Another shot—oh, Westminster Abbey.

"Well, I'm sure Westminster Abbey does not compare with Melbourne Cathedral."

I was led to ask: "But have you seen Westminster Abbey?"

"No," came the answer quickly, "and I don't want to." And then, after a pause, the spoken thought: "I don't think you like Melbourne." No surprise that educated Australians—and it was my honour to meet many of them—squirm when they hear their own country-people talk like this!

Discriminating praise is regarded as a polite way of hiding your dislike, which was now and then annoying because, personally, although I was obliged to smile at the conceit, I trust I was sufficiently discerning to admire the true metal underneath.

There were phases of life of which perforce I could know nothing personally, but about which I heard a great deal from Australians. From talk about the slackening of home ties the conversation drifted to the regard young folk have for their parents, followed by a consideration of the morality of the people. To assert that youthful Australians honour neither their father nor their mother would be a libel. Yet I hesitate to make even a rough guess of how often elderly folk complained to me of the decay of manners. Personally I had been struck

the other way. The courtesy of the Australian was a thing I noticed as soon as I landed on the shores, and I admired it during all my stay. But what was in the minds of the people who spoke to me was the independence of the younger generations. Remember, womanhood or manhood is reached in a warm clime like Australia much earlier than in colder regions. The result is that boys and girls of fourteen and fifteen years of age refuse to be under parental domination and "gang their ain gait." The consequence is that frequently there are outbursts of indignation, from pulpits and in the press, about the small regard there is for the moral code. When I was in Melbourne Chief Justice Madden spoke out against this evil. Statistics were produced to demonstrate the startling amount of illegitimacy; cases were even quoted of girls of thirteen years of age having children. Sir John Madden said: "In the Melbourne Women's Hospital during the year ended June 30, 1909, ninety unmarried girls under the age of 18 gave birth to children. Nineteen of these were between the ages of 14 and 16. In the Carlton Refuge, during the months of May-June, there were 34 inmates under 20 years of age; 13 were under the age of 17, and four were only 15."

A visitor who dared to say such a thing would probably be stoned out of the place; but writers in the Australian newspapers gave corroboration to the assertions, and many a man, well acquainted with life in the big cities, told me that the state of affairs was shocking. It was certainly difficult to believe; and I could not have thought morality was at such

a low point had not Australians told me sadly, mournfully, and with much trepidation concerning the future of their country, that it was all too true.

The cause? Many reasons were given me. First there was weakening in religion, the scant attention paid to it in the schools, and the niggardly attendance at places of worship on the Sunday—because that is the day much devoted to boating and surf-bathing and picnicking in the woods. Next there was the absence of consideration for the advice of parents. I know all about the promenading of the streets by young people in some of our English towns, but nowhere have I seen such flocks of children, twelve and thirteen years of age, brazenly marching the streets late at night as I have seen in some of the big towns of Australia. The final reason for the distressing state of morals is the climate. I have heard worthy people urge the introduction of the curfew, so that after a certain hour all young folk should be within doors. This seems inhuman, because when the daytime has been pantingly hot it would almost be a crime to keep the young people indoors when the refreshing cool of the night approaches. Anyway, it is clear that Australia, amongst its many problems, has to face one upon which the highest well-being of the land depends, the proper guardianship of the purity of its young womanhood.

The antagonism to large families is a serious menace to the Commonwealth. All publicists agree that there is a growing shirking of the responsibilities of parenthood. The following extract is from the report of the Royal Commission on the

"Decline of the Birth Rate" (1904): "In whatever way the waning birth rate of New South Wales is viewed, whether in its effects on health, character, or social worth of individuals; on the value of the family as the basis of national life; on the quality and dignity of civic life; on the character of the people; on their social, moral, and economic progress; on their national aims and aspirations; or on their capacity to survive in the rivalry of nations; and whether it is viewed in the light of history or of science, it is seen as a grave disorder, sapping the vitals of a new people, dispelling its hopes, blighting its prospects, and threatening its continuance. Patriotism dictates that the people of to-day should consider what the facts mean to the future. It is the duty of the present generation of Australians to see to it that their patriotism is not impugned in time to come, and that the loss of this fair heritage of the British race, which under existing conditions, the philosophy of history foretells, is not made attributable to them by those who may, in the days to come, have to sacrifice their blood and treasure in the vain hope of defending it."

The Sydney City Coroner recently spoke in the following terms: "Now, this seems an opportune time to mention that this is the tenth of the inquests on the bodies of newly-born infants found dead in public places in my district within the past six months . . . in at least six of these ten cases the deaths . . . were feloniously caused. . . . These figures, taken in conjunction with the fair and reasonable supposition that the bodies discovered

constitute merely a percentage of the bodies unlawfully disposed of, appear simply appalling."

The following is from the pastoral letter adopted recently by the Presbyterian General Assembly, sitting in Melbourne: "We, in common with the Church in all ages, wish to denounce this cowardly and selfish refusal of parentage as a crime both against humanity and against God. The callous selfishness of such a course is in itself shocking; but when we see, as we must do, that a continuance and spread of it will bring about the decay, and ultimately the ruin, of our race and nation, the call to all men and women who are loyal to our civilisation becomes most urgent. If the higher and Christianised races take and keep this path, then inevitably the non-Christian races will displace them. . . When these things have had their perfect work, the crime against humanity involved in race suicide will stand out in all its blackness in the national and racial ruin it has brought."

Some of the noblest-minded people in the world, whom it was an honour to meet, are striving, but I am afraid ineffectually, to bring the people to a full appreciation of their responsibilities.

The attitude of the Australian—and I mean the average Australian, and not the exception which I am well aware can be quoted against me—toward the Old World, its traditions and monuments, its history and what it has spelt to mankind, is one of the most captivating of side studies. Australians are fond of measuring themselves alongside Americans and believing they own the same qualities—which

they do not. The Americans like European history; they feel they are the outcome of it; the romance of history appeals to their sentiment. The Australian does not care. Also, he does not understand; and as for romance, he would rather have a blood-and-thunder novel—it means just as much to him and is more interesting.

Now I, for one, do not pass any criticism upon them for this. The strange thing would be if it were otherwise. Except by name, few of them have any historic connection with Europe. They come of brave, valiant sires and courageous, true-hearted women, and the knowledge of ancestry does not go further back than the early settlers.

Australia has no history, in the ordinary meaning of the term. There are no traditions, no cathedrals sacred with the ages, no venerable castles which have played a part in the life of the nation. The Australians are a new people, starting from scratch as it were. Besides, they are so far removed from the mighty centres of the world's population, that happenings ten or fifteen thousand miles away are often quite meaningless to them.

Therefore, although at first it is all rather surprising to the student from another part of the world, a little thought makes it clear that, removed from the possibility of comparison with the long settled countries, and actively conscious only of the great things accomplished in their own country, they should be well satisfied with themselves without bothering their heads about life in other lands.

## CHAPTER XII

### A MALIGNED STATE

"I have come to tell you of the glorious news you'll all be glad to hear,
Of the pleasant alterations that are taking place this year.
So kindly pay attention, and I'll pass the whisper round:
The squatters, of their own free will, will this year pay the pound."

OLD BUSH SONG.

THE Australians, like the Americans, love bigness. It is not unpleasant to see a long-limbed Australian stretch his legs on the club veranda, and, whilst he twirls his cigar, tell you what a gigantic continent Australia is—as though he made it—and what a tiny little hole of a place England must be—just as though you were responsible for that. His favourite design is a map of Australia, with Europe, minus Russia, swallowed up in it.

So, in Western Australia the first thing handed me was an outline map, showing that the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and half a dozen other European countries could be tucked within its borders. A handbook, for the instruction of the visitor, informed me there are nearly a million square miles of territory in this State.

Indeed, figures, financial and statistical, concerning areas and the value of the produce, and what the timber is producing, and what the goldfields yield,

were pitched at me in such profusion that my mind danced hazy, and I could not recollect whether the figures had to do with the pearl fisheries or the cherry crop. Anyway, it was all very wonderful, and Government officials pumped figures into me as air might be pumped into the lungs of a nigh-drowned man.

Progress! Nine years ago the population of all Western Australia was only 46,000. To-day it is 270,000—trifling, but showing a jump.

I almost missed seeing "W.A.," as it is called all over the continent. In the eastern States it was intimated I would be rather wasting my time going to see that desolate stretch of the continent, famous for nothing but "sun, sin, sand, sorrow and sore eyes." All this, however, was just another wretched incident in the story of Australia's inter-State dislikes.

These last few years the W.A.'s have done wonders. The goldfields attracted population; the influx gave a fillip to development; "deserts" are now part of the wheat belt; drought, the nightmare of other parts of Australia, is unknown; railways are being flung forth; a really sensible system of irrigation is being inaugurated. All these will be still further taken advantage of when the—well, when the "potentialities" of W.A. are properly advertised.

Here was a people of fewer than 50,000, most of them native-born, practically shut off from the rest of the world save for occasional calling steamers—a scattered people, with their chief town, Perth, little more than a village, far away from culture

and learning, with all the temptations, one would imagine, to slide back into a sort of half civilisation. Then suddenly, with the gold discovery as an impetus, they bestirred themselves, and are determined to make W.A. something very different from the travesty which dear friends in other States depict it to be.

For all practical purposes an inland community, the West Australians set about welding their State into usefulness. They were led by Sir John Forrest, bluff, vigorous, far-seeing, a man who played the fatherly autocrat. Material success was panted for. Another man, Dr. Hackett, kept before the public eye the need for other things besides material prosperity. A baby parliament, with, maybe, a solicitor as premier, and the ministry composed of farmers, grocers, barbers, land agents, publicans, laid hold of problems which some European statesmen would have boggled at. That is the striking thing: settlers and the sons of settlers, with all the disadvantages which must rest upon the shoulders of those who have to wrest a livelihood from Nature, starting cheerily, merrily, to knock a piece of country half as big as Europe into shape.

Perth, the capital, has to-day a population of some 60,000. It is well built, wide-streeted, and is by the side of the beautiful Swan River, which here opens into a lagoon-like sweep. The public offices are imposing, the Legislature, not completed, dominates a noble eminence; a commodious Government House is close to a pretty park; the King's Park, a magnificent and well-kept demesne, over-

looks the fair and white-walled town and the lake-breast of the Swan; there is a worthy town hall, and also a pile of post-office buildings which no town in England six times the size can surpass. There are two daily newspapers, two theatres, a museum, a picture gallery, and a zoological garden. The three latter owe their existence to the enthusiasm of Dr. Hackett, a Trinity College, Dublin, man, who, forced by ill-health, came out to this land long years ago, and has done as much as Sir John Forrest himself, though in another direction, to lead the warm-hearted West Australians along the road of judicious development. Now he is advancing a scheme very dear to his heart—the establishment of a university.

To say that all these things are duly appreciated by the people would be misrepresentation. There are plenty of men—and men, too, who have played a good part, tugging and pushing W.A. into well-being—who growl at all this educational, artistic and zoological nonsense. It is not monkey-houses, pictures of semi-nude women, and stories about what wicked kings did centuries ago in far-away, over-populous Europe which have made the State what it is. It is thew and muscle, the swinging of axes, the making of roads, the construction of railroads, the crushing of gold quartz. These men are practical, serious, apparently unimaginative—and yet what a glow of imagination must be behind their wrinkled and sun-dried foreheads when they picture what they intend to do within the next few years!

That there is much poor, sandy, unyielding soil

in Western Australia goes without saying. It is not all a garden. But in the hills to the north there are luxuriant pastures where cattle thrive abundantly. That part, however, is scarcely a white man's country; the heat is terrific, and at seasons the fly nuisance is maddening. Take a line, however, north of Perth. From there down south to the sea the whole of the south-west country is not only a white man's land, but one where the climate is good and warm and happy, conditions of life agreeable, and the agricultural prospects enormous.

Well, it is to stir this part into agricultural success that the efforts of the State are now mainly directed, and a well thought-out plan, an improvement on the Canadian system, is being worked to attract the serviceable immigrant. Passage money from £6 upwards will be granted to suitable persons in Europe who are possessed of a capital of £50; but if there are more than three children under twelve years of age, the applicant must possess a further sum of £25 for each additional child. Better assistance is given to farm labourers, much needed in this State of high wages and scant workers. Let £10 be deposited in London, and £5 is advanced to help in payment of the sea passage; then, on arrival in Western Australia, the £10 is returned. The same rule applies to domestic servants, except that only £5 deposit is required. Residents in Western Australia may nominate friends and relatives to come out from England, and these get anything from £6 to £18 10s. to assist them. Of course, there is a balance to be provided by the individual; but the

new arrival, if he proceeds to settle on Government land, can get a refund of half the amount he has spent on coming out, provided the amount does not go beyond £9 10s. Then, settlers who have left their wives and families in the "Old Country," or in the eastern States of Australia and New Zealand, can get passage money advanced and railway tickets to their destination provided, and the money can be repaid over a long period, with interest at 5 per cent. Helped immigrants must be under fifty years of age if married, and under forty-five if single. Further, all males so helped must have some knowledge of farming. Thus steps are taken to attract the type of immigrant most needed in a new country. In Perth is a receiving home for immigrants; new arrivals are met by officials, and for three days free food and lodgings are provided; after that a small charge is made.

Steps have been taken to prevent the acquisition of large estates, even by the most competent of agriculturists. The object is to make Western Australia a sort of Mecca for the small farmer, where he is not likely to be crushed and undersold by his big neighbour, with superior appliances. So—bearing in mind that in the old days great areas passed into private ownership—the Government will allow no man to acquire more than two thousand acres of State land, though his wife may acquire a further one thousand acres.

This, however, may be a distant prospect on the horizon of the English or Scotch farm labourer who, dissatisfied with his life at home, and having

courage to pull up stakes, is looking round the world for a suitable place where he may start afresh. He naturally wants to know how he, with an assisted passage, a few pounds in his pocket, is going to fare when he reaches this new land, which is still much of a mystery to him. Well, every male over sixteen years may select a homestead farm of from 10 to 160 acres—a quarter of a square mile—just the same as Canada offers. The occupation certificate is issued for seven years. Personal residence is required for six months in each of the first five years. Four shillings an acre must be spent on the land during the first two years, six shillings more an acre during the next three years, and then an additional four shillings an acre—or, by the time the land is wholly his own, he must be in a position to spend fourteen shillings an acre on it. If the settler is prosperous, he can buy up a thousand acres from the Government at ten shillings an acre, and he can pay for them in half-yearly instalments spread over twenty years. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that working men can select half an acre within a township, or five acres outside, at a minimum price of twenty shillings an acre, payable in ten years by half-yearly instalments. Residence and improvements are necessary, and the Government allow one-half the cost of any house toward the improvements required.

Still the prospective immigrant hesitates. He is willing to work; he has farming experience; he has a few spare pounds; but what can he do without capital? Here steps in the Agricultural Bank,

unique, I believe, to Western Australia—a Government institution to lend money to settlers. It lends anything from £25 to £500 for clearing land of trees, fencing, providing water supply, and the like. But what about repayment? During the first five years only 5 per cent. interest is charged on the loan; and the settler must be a poor farmer if he cannot make his property sufficiently productive to pay 5 per cent. After five years it is necessary to repay the advance in fifty instalments, spread over twenty-five years. Money is advanced on the full value of the improvements as they are effected, and even £100 is granted for the purpose of purchasing breeding stock.

True, the sturdy new-comer, taking advantage of all these things, finds himself a debtor to the Government. But I know of no other part of the world where such inducements are held out to the farm labourer of Europe to come to try his luck.

What of the climate and prospects? In the south-western region the former is magnificent. I was there for only a short time, but sufficiently long to appreciate its excellence; a steady and dependable rainfall in what is known as the winter months—snow is never seen—and the summer warm, with continuous blue skies, and each evening a breeze from the ocean. It was only half a dozen years ago that Western Australia—relying chiefly on her gold mining—imported most of her food supply. She is overtaking the local demand, and in the matter of wheat is beginning to export. It has been discovered also that the south-west has particular qualities for the growing of fruit. Apples,

peaches, oranges, lemons, pears, and cherries are grown. Some of the most luscious oranges and cherries I have ever tasted came from this district.

It should, nevertheless, not be forgotten that most of this land is wooded, and has to be cleared before it is ready for fruit-growing. Ring-barking is resorted to; that is, a ring cut is made round the base of the trees, which decay in about two years—and few things are so sad as a mass of leafless trees stretching forth their bare arms. Then they are burnt down, and the plough can be put into the soil. Striking an average, I should say it costs about 7s. 6d. per acre to clear. In some districts there is a tangle of scrubby undergrowth. The way this is removed is instructive. Three steel railway rails, fastened in the form of a triangle, are drawn by four horses; the stuff is thus mown down, left to die, and is then fired. Twenty or thirty acres can be mown in a day.

Let there be no misunderstanding. The soil is poor when compared with that of England. It is even indifferent when compared with the soil of the eastern States. But this part of Australia has one immense advantage over those eastern States: it is never afflicted with drought. Taking the last ten years' average, I found that, while the wheat yield in New South Wales was ten bushels to the acre, in Victoria eight, in South Australia seven, it was eleven in Western Australia.

In order to develop the country, the Government allows people to take up land without residence, which means that a good many townspeople invest

in land, paying for it by instalments, and have practical men settled to work it for them. When in Perth I heard of shortness of money amongst the people, and a pessimist even whispered into my ear that this was due to Western Australia not being so prosperous as it was. On further investigation, however, I gathered that although the people have not so much to spend as formerly, this was chiefly due to their putting their money into the land, an enormous quantity of which is not yet productive. Formerly, the plan was for any settler to go roaming and find his patch for himself, and then the value had to be appraised by the Government. The present plan is for the Government to survey and divide the land into blocks before selection. There are now some half-million acres available for selection, and nearly forty surveyors are out prospecting other areas. This is a huge benefit, for the new arrival has a very clearly mapped plan of the selection where his choice inclines him to settle.

Gigantic tracts being specially suitable for pastoral purposes—cattle and sheep—the man with money, who wants to embark on sheep farming, can lease from the Government thousands of acres. In the south-west he pays £1 per thousand acres per annum for not less than 3,000 acres, whilst in the eastern division of the State he must take up at least 20,000 acres, at a rental of 5s. per annum for each thousand acres. At other places it is 3s. per thousand acres. I will not say it is good land—some of it will only carry one sheep to ten acres!—but that it is profitable is demonstrated by the fact that

over 160,000,000 acres are so held, and over 6,000,000 acres were taken up on these terms during the first seven months of 1909. The land must be stocked or forfeited.

Dairy farming is beginning to go ahead; pig raising is prosperous; mixed farming is proving successful. Butter factories are established at various places; cold storage and refrigerating cars are provided on the railways. The Government are repurchasing large estates, slicing them into small farms, and reselling blocks at anything from 3s. to £4 an acre. On such land a settler with some money can begin farming at once. Also the Government are clearing stretches of "bush," so that the new-comer can start at once without the better part of three years being spent in clearing. An experimental farm has been set up some 160 miles from Perth, and scientific and practical instruction is given. The course covers two years, but a student can limit his attendance to six months. The fee is £10 a year, including board and lodging, but not bed linen. In return for instruction and maintenance the students must do farm work. There are four smaller experiment farms and a dairy farm. It is all very wonderful.

Surely nowhere can a small community of a quarter of a million of people be found doing so much to make their territory flourish, and to attract to it those hundreds of thousands of poor people in the old lands of Europe who are seeking fresh homes beyond the seas.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE DESERT CITY

"They had told us of pastures wide and green,
To be sought past the sunset's glow;
Of rifts in the ranges by opal lit,
And gold 'neath the river's flow.
And thirst and hunger were banished words,
When they spoke of that unknown West;
No drought they dreaded, no flood they feared,
Where the pelican builds her nest!"

MARY HANNAY FOOTT.

"SUN, sand, sin, sorrow, and sore eyes," as I have already mentioned, is the east Australian's uncomplimentary description of Western Australia. And "agriculture," it may be added, though the word is not alliterative. And gold, it may also be added—and the gold mines have done more than anything to direct the eyes of settlers to this land of the west.

It was a forsaken land once, abhorred, burnt-up, accursed, and the British Government made the banks of the Swan River—where the black swans come from—a convict settlement. Great work was done by forced labour. Perth's town hall was built by convicts. The slit windows in the tower are after the design of the broad arrow, showing the architect was a subtle humorist.

For half a century Western Australia lay asleep.

The people were adrift from the rest of the world. New-comers were few. But pioneers, who pushed through the bush and traversed the dry, sweltering plains, occasionally came back with nuggets of gold.

Gold brings lust into the eyes of men. Daring fellows pressed across the featureless regions, where the sun glare baked their cheeks and the absence of water shrivelled their tongues, seeking for Mount Youle, which never existed, but which, according to story, was literally a heap of gold. The miners' town of Coolgardie prospered and waned.

In 1893—only yesterday as it were—a party of a hundred odd prospectors set off to look for the Australian El Dorado. Water ran short. Two men went searching for a spring and to round up some wandering horses. Their names were Hannan and Flannigan. They did not find water. Paddy Hannan found a hundred ounces of gold on a bare sandy stretch, bleak of all vegetation and with nothing but illimitable waste around.

The news spread and the rush came. The place was called Hannans. The native name was sought. First it was Calgoola; next it was Kalgurli; to-day it is Kalgoorlie—one of the wonder places of the world.

Kalgoorlie, with the neighbouring township of Boulder, has a population of over 30,000, and 6,000 men are working in the mines. Since the gold discovery was made in 1893, over 12,183,000 tons of ore have been treated, giving £45,000,000 worth of gold, of which £16,000,000 has been paid in dividends. Each month about £100,000 is disbursed in wages,

and some £84,000 is spent in fuel, merchandise, and machinery. At present 140,000 tons of gold ore are treated every month, and the value of it is £320,000.

Round the mines has grown a town, wide streeted, with great public buildings. Churches, hotels, theatres have been reared. Tram-cars dash along the main ways. There is the inevitable race-course. The Australians are a town-proud people. So civic life is vigorous, and the people of Kalgoorlie, whilst hungry for gold, have never dropped their ideal of making a beautiful town in the desert.

You leave Perth late in the afternoon. You traverse a sunburnt land for about three hundred miles, and next morning you are at Kalgoorlie. The winds sweep across the desert. Dust clouds whirl over the city.

But the people are made of the right stuff. They are determined. The fact that they have had to erect their city hundreds of miles from any adequate water supply has given them zest. The times when water had to be carted and men washed themselves with soda water are beginning to be forgotten.

The vicissitudes of gold-mining, success, failure, fortunes lost, fortunes won, the sickness of hope unsatisfied, the thrill of unexampled prosperity—all is like a dream.

Swindling companies, drawing money from British investors to get gold from locations where it was perfectly well known no gold existed, are not now mentioned.

The area is a sort of Monte Cristo.

The extraordinary yield—12 per cent. of the

whole world's gold supply—has caused a flush of speculation, and not a few of the gold companies are over-capitalised—with British money chiefly. Western Australia has borrowed many millions for development, but within the last seventeen years sufficient precious metal has been drawn from this patch of Western Australia to cover it all—ten million ounces of gold and six hundred thousand ounces of silver. Nowhere is more up-to-date machinery to be found. All the latest scientific treatments are adopted, and ore, which a few years back was not worth dealing with, is profitable. The mining of low grade ore is one of the things of which Western Australia is proud.

The Government takes toll from the dividend receivers. Also it acts the part of encouraging parent to the gold-mining industry. The State provides machinery, crushing mills, and the like, so that the poor prospector who has staked out a claim may have a good chance in competition with the great companies equipped with the most recent appliances. On a capital expenditure of £230,000 these State plants have crushed out gold valued at £2,500,000. Besides this, the Government subsidises private crushing plants, assists syndicates, advances money to individual workers. So a good deal of the outlying mining is done by humble miners. All this is useful, because—owing to hanky-panky company-floating five or six years ago —the present-day British investor is shy about throwing his money into Western Australia.

There must always be hazard in gold-mining.

But the era of gambling is over, and the day of the swindler has gone. Though there is practically no British money coming into the country—burnt fingers prevent that—the majority of the mines, apart from the fact that many are over-capitalised, are being worked on sound business lines. A pile of millions has been poured into the country; but, despite the amazing output, the dividend seeker has not got much return because of the over-capitalisation to which I have alluded.

I heard the Western Australian grumble at the lack of confidence on the part of London financiers. Also I heard snarling that the mere British investor should get so much as he does in dividends. Surely a curious position to take up! No man puts his money into a gold mine unless he hopes to have a big return. Millions of British money have already been lost down Westralian mines—money which has left England and been largely disbursed in Western Australia, often in the opening of poverty-stricken shafts. It is, therefore, rather stupid and certainly unreasonable on the part of the people of Western Australia—and I only mention the matter because so many of them are sore on the point—to complain, after having been provided by British investors with the money which has assisted to make Kalgoorlie what it is, of the money which goes back to England by way of dividend. However, the hesitation of the London capitalist during the last few years has impelled the Government—especially as so much has been done to assist agriculturists—to assist the small miner, with the consequence that

slowly a good deal of the result of gold production remains in the hands of Western Australians, and does not pass on to outsiders in the shape of dividend.

Kalgoorlie is not the only mushroom town of prodigious growth. There are other places in other countries which have grown more quickly. But I know of no city in the New or Old Worlds which so quickly has settled down, cast off its rawness, and, whilst spick, span, and new, gives evidence of a healthy municipal and public life. There are men still young who recall with a chuckle the hard old days when the first prospectors put fists on nuggets of alluvial gold at Coolgardie, of the mad scurry to this region, of the speedy exhaustion of surface gold-winning, and then the despair, the ruin, the agony when the realisation came that the gold was but a sprinkling, the glitter of which had tempted men to their doom. That was the day when the bogus companies sprouted and withered. Then came Hannan's find, which opened up what is known the whole world over as the Golden Mile. A hamlet of shanties first, then a municipal council coming into existence in a year or two, then the planning of a worthy city.

So now, instead of drab desert, there is a delightful town. Where no weed could find water to raise its head are well-cropped lawns and miles of trees shaking their leaves in the hot breeze. Near yonder hill, Lamington Heights, dotted with happy villas, are the golf links. Take a stroll along Hannan and Maritana Streets in the fall of the afternoon, and you will see as well dressed and well set-up women

as in any town on the Continent. The tramway traffic is busy. The shops are good—remarkably good when you remember Western Australia is not a manufacturing country and nearly all articles have to be brought several thousands of miles. And your eye need not be quick to take in the fact that the most striking and ornate buildings are the hotels and drinking saloons—a testimony to the thirstiness of the land.

There are fifty places in the municipality where beverage can be obtained, and the cheapest price for a drink is one shilling.

With the early cessation of business and the coming of the cool night, Kalgoorlie turns out in its thousands to see and be seen, to promenade Hannan Street whilst the lamplights send a glow over the scene. What must appeal to the thought is that everybody is well dressed. There are no gorgeous dames reclining in barouches, such as we see in London's Piccadilly; but neither is there the crowd of slinking, sickening, wretched creatures which are to be found in our East-end. The climate of Kalgoorlie is not good. But the people are of good material, and with their parks, their clubs, their fine race-course, their abounding prosperity, their saloons, life goes with them very well.

Purposely I have kept back the greatest wonder of all. Nature placed the gold down in the quartz below the desert. It was gold hunger which led men to risk their all, to undergo innumerable hardships to snatch wealth. But with the scantiest rainfall, no river, the wells inefficient, how comes

this town of approaching 40,000 people to get a water supply, and why do the trees flourish and the lawns keep so green?

The water is all pumped from Perth, 400 miles away. The damming of a river on its way to the sea, the laying down of pipes, and the erection of pumping stations to drive the water over the hills—and it takes eight days for the water to do the journey—that is the best evidence in Western Australia of what virility there is in the people.

There were not a hundred thousand people in all Western Australia when it came to be recognised that if Kalgoorlie was to go ahead, and be other than a mere mining camp, one of the most gigantic water schemes must be faced. The mines might be exhausted any year. The State would be saddled with debt. Violent opposition came from other parts of Western Australia. The State was going to be ruined; it was going to undertake a burden which would break its back. But Sir John Forrest, then Premier, set his teeth. He "bossed" Western Australia. The thing had to be; and it was. But would it be a success? When the dam had been built and the pipes laid, and the water was about to be sent over all those hundreds of miles the chief engineer went mad and blew out his brains.

Not only is Kalgoorlie supplied, but townships on the way also. At places are branch pipes running off to supply some town, say, fifty miles away. Twenty-six towns and townships are supplied, with 788 miles of piping. A great community with a million of inhabitants might have undertaken the work and

been congratulated on its daring. It is, however, by maintaining a sense of proportion, recollecting how trifling was the population when the scheme was inaugurated, that one is lost in amazement at what has been done. Three million two hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds were spent in construction. The annual consumption of water is 951,546,000 gallons, or 2,607,000 daily. The cost of Mundaring reservoir was £250,000, and it has a capacity of 4,600,000,000 gallons. The cost of eight pumping stations and machinery—raising the water a net lift of 1,210 feet—was £435,000. Putting down 351 miles of 30in. pipe—as from one end of England to the other—was £1,800,000. The total annual charges, including £103,400 for interest, are £191,200, whilst the revenue, after deducting working expenses, is £110,000. Accordingly, the scheme is doing little more than pay for the interest on the capital. But there is not now a man in Western Australia who has any doubt about its financial success. Indirectly it is a huge success: it has been the cause of an influx of population; it has, as a consequence, increased trading; it has developed mining. In a multitude of ways it has increased the wealth of the State.

It seems to be a blessed provision of nature, certainly in this west land of Australia, that the tracts unsuitable for agricultural advancement should be the regions most likely to produce mineral wealth. Gold always tickles the public imagination. Yet I think that Western Australia's output of minerals will in the future depend more on less valu-

able metals. Tin streams have been struck, and though the price fluctuates, very profitable operations are now in progress. The same may be written in regard to copper mining. In one year the value of the output moved from £50,337 to £180,337; but prices have since fallen. Lead has been discovered, and, when the mines have been properly exploited, will yield a rich harvest to the investor. There is plenty of iron ore, but practically nothing has been done to work it. Thick seams of coal, but not of high class quality, have been chipped at; as Fremantle is the nearest existing port between Australia and the Old World there is the likelihood of an enlarged industry in supplying steamships with fuel. In general, Western Australia, which has been for so long the Cinderella of the continent, shows every manifestation of becoming one of the most valuable parts of the Empire.

Unwise, however, is any State which relies solely on its mineral resources for progress. Western Australia has got its eggs in a good many baskets. The best thing of all is the strenuous endeavour to survey the suitable farming portions and to woo suitable settlers to this neglected slice of Australia.

In all my investigations I was again and again brought to pause in considering the illimitable expanse of Western Australia and the sparseness of the population.

Look at a map, and in the northern region you will see Kimberley. Here one hundred people lease nearly 40 million acres of cattle runs, and the country held for pastoral purposes exceeds

160,000,000 acres, or an area considerably larger than the whole of France! Cattle in the extreme north, and sheep in the north-west, thrive exceedingly. If I wanted to become rich in ten years, and I had no objection to the loneliness of station life—though the fascination of it grows and grips with the years—I think I would like to be a squatter in this territory. I met many of the squatters —nice, frank, hospitable men, well-to-do, even wealthy, most of them, with no necessity to live under the arduous, strained conditions of their brothers whom they have left in the "old country." Their chief duty, during most of the year, is to lean on a fence whilst the beasts fatten and the sheep lamb and grow wool and make the squatter's bank balance swell. He has no drought. He is not expected to fence his property. He can get "black fellows" to do most of the work. From the Government he can lease 600,000 acres for £75 a year! The life is lonely, except when the "black fellows" spear cattle. The sub-tropical climate is certainly enervating. But what kind of hustle do you need in a land where practically the only work of the year is the shearing of the sheep and getting the wool to a railway line?

It must be said, however, that there is a swelling public opinion against tracts of country, almost as large as Wales, being in the hands of single squatters. They were the pioneers. They showed the way into what was once a no-man's-land. They had what they took. All that is now stopped, and the free land is held by the Government, and the

tendency—to be accentuated if anything like quick settlement takes place—is, as the giant leases fall in, to cut the sections into lesser strips and so encourage small settlers rather than large settlers.

Thus it will be seen, so far as public opinion can be gauged by ministerial action, that the rich man —as the word is generally understood—is not wanted in Western Australia, but rather a multitude of small settlers, so that the State may have as its human bulwark a sturdy yeoman class.

# CHAPTER XIV

## CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT

"The South will wake to a mighty change ere a hundred years are done,
With arsenals west of the mountain range and every spur its gun;
And many a rickety 'son of a gun,' on the tides of the future tossed
Will tell how battles were really won that History says were lost."

HENRY LAWSON.

IN considering the growth of Australia into a nation it is useful to take a glimpse of the gradual development from the time it was a penal settlement, until it became a struggling colony split into several States, and slowly, laboriously moving toward the creation of a Commonwealth.

At first, when the only use to which the country was put was a place of exportation for convicts, the Governor was king—not much interfered with by the authorities at home, and so able to do much what he pleased. He had power to impose or to remit taxation, just as he thought well. As the settlement in New South Wales grew, the authority invested in one man was recognised as too great; so there was created a Council of from five to seven members—practically a committee formed to rule the land. It was not until 1842, however, that a Legislature

was created. It might be called a Representative Assembly; but it was hardly democratic, because, whilst of the thirty-six members, twenty-four were to be elected by the people, twelve were nominated by the Sovereign. The Council did not possess the powers of a responsible government, because all the heads of the departments and all public officials were still appointed and dismissed by the Governor on behalf of the Crown. The people, however, had tasted a little of the sweets of authority. Agitation began. The people in Victoria and in South Australia, all voluntary immigrants into Australia, and disliking to be associated with New South Wales, which they regarded as tainted with convictism, succeeded in breaking loose from the parent State.

Each of the States then came under the control of a Legislative Council as a sort of Upper House, and a House of Representatives as a sort of Lower House. These new Governments received wide powers; they could impose what taxation they liked. The only restraint put upon them was that no law passed should be repugnant to the law of England, that there should be no interference with the sale and the appropriation of Crown lands, that no customs duties of a differential character should be imposed, and that the Governor of each State, on behalf of the King at home, should exercise a veto on any measure brought forward.

So the institution of democratic government was started. Gradually the powers were extended until a fully responsible system was secured. In time

the northern portion of New South Wales broke loose, and the State of Queensland came into existence. Western Australia, so far removed from the other States, had a separate life, chiefly controlled by an Executive Council until 1870, when the principle of representative government was introduced. It was not, however, until 1893 that Western Australia got into line with the other States, and secured an elected, responsible Government.

In a previous chapter I have dealt with the provincialism which resulted from the States being absolutely independent of each other in development. There were far-seeing men who recognised that there could be no advance toward the production of a nation so long as the States were inclined to be antagonistic, and occasionally waged tariff wars upon each other's goods. The germ of Federal Government was in the minds of many. The vision of a Commonwealth began to appear. The creation of a Commonwealth was an idea which all men were disposed to agree with in general principle; yet when it was considered as a practical proposition great obstacles arose. The main question debated in all the States was, "What shall we get out of it?"

Besides, there were different tariff systems. New South Wales was a free trade State. Its immediate neighbour and great competitor, Victoria, was a protective State. Victoria did not want her markets to be freely invaded by the manufactures of New South Wales. New South Wales hesitated to get into line with Victoria, to have protection and possibly raise the price of goods.

The movement toward federation was slow. When at last it was adopted, it was adopted with misgivings. Many of the State politicians resisted because they saw that, by the establishment of a greater Government, some of their powers and much of their influence would depart. Still, the hope that all would be well was nourished.

In my opinion all is well. Yet I believe that, if a referendum could be taken to-day, Federal Government would be abolished and the State Governments would regain much of their waning power. But there will be no referendum. Federation is going to stay. The Commonwealth will wax. Many of the powers now held by the State Governments must, in the fullness of time, pass to the Federal Government. Still, in conversations with the leaders of public opinion in the States, I did not fail to recognise the strong conviction that as Australia is so large, and the interests of various parts of the continent so different, rule from a central authority could not be so advantageous to the community as rule by a Government with peculiar local knowledge of the particular needs of each particular State. There is much in that. I do not believe, however, that in the increase of power which must come to the Commonwealth—it already controls the customs, decides on matters of defence, ought to control the railways, and it is an open point whether it should not also have complete control over land settlement—that the State Governments ought to be, or will be, deprived of a voice in what can legitimately be described as purely State affairs.

Besides the Governor-General of the Commonwealth, an office now held with much charm by the Earl of Dudley, each State has its own Governor. With the coming of a Governor-General the radiance about the State Governors has been somewhat dimmed. There is a body of opinion which believes that the time has come when these Governors appointed by the King should be dispensed with, and in their place there should be Governors of Australian birth. I venture to assert that such a change would be a serious mistake. To have Australian Governors would mean that the office would generally be held by political derelicts, that there would inevitably be much wire-pulling to secure the dignity, and that whoever held the office would be fairly certain to have many personal opponents. The present Governors, nominated by the King, have had no association with local party politics. By their office they are above party. They are English gentlemen of high birth and distinction, and they form the centre of a social life, clean and elevating, which has a marked and beneficial influence upon the whole of the community.

Though federation is only ten years old, the idea of a Federal Government has been in existence for over sixty years. As far back as 1849 a Privy Council Committee urged there should be a uniform tariff, and that there should be a Governor-General of Australia. Indeed, Sir Charles Fitzroy was appointed "Governor-General of all her Majesty's Australian possessions." This office existed, nominally, until 1861, when it lapsed. In succeeding years spas-

modic movements were made toward federation. They failed because there were States, especially those smaller in population like South Australia and Queensland, which feared that if they cast in their lot with the other States they would practically be ruled by New South Wales and Victoria, where the majority of the population resided. Yet the idea grew. In the early 'eighties a conference got so far as to recommend that there should be a Federal Council, a sort of superior committee, representative of all States, to discuss things which they had in common, but not the establishment of a Federal Parliament. It was hoped that New Zealand would join. That country declined. New South Wales, chiefly because it was a free trade State, also held back. Nevertheless, in 1885, the British Government approved of the creation of a Federal Council. It was a failure, and it died.

It was the subject of imperial defence which stimulated the public mind of Australia to the recognition of the fact that as the country was so far from Great Britain, and dependent upon Great Britain to save it from attack, if an evil day came when the fair lands of Australia might be desired by another Power, no State had any provision worth talking about for resisting invasion. It was seen that all the States ought to act in common to provide some adequate system of coast defence. In the dark days of the South African War the danger to which Australia might suddenly be exposed was borne in upon the consciousness of the Australians. This was the crowning argument to many arguments

which for years had been impressed upon the citizens. Nobody had anything to say against a united Australia. It was the debating of how a plan could be devised, that would give advantage to them all, which blocked the way.

National Conventions were held. Conferences of Premiers took place. States began to get into line. Queensland, Western Australia, and New Zealand stood back. As public opinion grew, Western Australia joined New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. It became clear that New Zealand intended to keep outside the federation. It was decided to go on without her. All the States were now agreed except Queensland. The rest of the States were not to be restrained from proceeding because Queensland would not come in. A popular vote was taken on federation in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, and a majority of well over 100,000 was in favour of federation. Later there came a second popular vote, with Queensland this time joining in, and the majority was well over 200,000. Later a referendum was taken in Western Australia, and whilst 44,000 voted for federation, only 19,000 voted against it. The way was clear.

It was on September 17th, 1900, that Queen Victoria signed the proclamation—which is now to be seen in Melbourne, together with the pen which she used on that occasion—declaring that on and after January 1st, 1901, the people of the six States should be united in a Federal Commonwealth under the name of the Commonwealth of Australia.

So Australia was born as a nation. The Governor-General represents the King. There is a Senate, and there is a House of Representatives.

It is interesting to compare the constitution of Australia with that of Great Britain. Our Upper Chamber, the House of Lords, is hereditary; but the Senate, which is composed of six senators from each of the States, is elected for six years on an electoral qualification, the same as that for electing members to the House of Representatives; and half the senators for each State vacate their seats at the expiration of three years.* A senator loses his place if he is absent from the Senate without permission for two months of any session. At least one-third of the whole number of senators must be present in order to constitute a meeting. In our House of Lords a quorum is three. The House of Representatives, which is twice the size of the Senate and reflects proportional representation, is elected for a period of no longer than three years. I know that short Parliaments have their advocates in Great Britain. Though I am well aware it is a point open to dispute, my own impression is that these three-year Parliaments in Australia are not good. The first year a ministry is chiefly occupied in getting into the saddle; the second year some definite legis-

* Though the Senate is elected on the same qualification as that for electing the House of Representatives, there is this important difference: for the Senate elections each State polls as one single constituency—which explains the predominance of the Labour Party in the Upper Chamber—and each State, Tasmania the same as New South Wales, returns an equal number of senators, six. This is the salient blunder in the Commonwealth constitution.

lation may be advanced; the third year is devoted to political manipulation in order to have a good case to present when next an appeal is made to the electorate. As in the Senate, members of the House of Representatives lose their seats if they are away for two months without permission. Each senator and each member of the House of Representatives receives £600 a year. Both Chambers are elected on adult suffrage.

Now what are the powers of this Australian Parliament? It has control of all trade and commerce and can impose taxation, but without any discrimination as between States. It can give bounties on the production or export of goods. It can borrow money. It has the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth under its control, and also the postal, telegraphic and telephonic services. It has authority over currency, marriage, divorce, old age pensions, immigration, conciliation and arbitration, over the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one State—that is, whilst, say, the New South Wales State Government has a perfect right to pass special industrial laws, the Commonwealth can interfere if those laws affect Victoria or any other State. There is a provision, though not yet exercised, whereby the Commonwealth can acquire, with the consent of a State, any railways on terms arranged between the Commonwealth and the State. From the admirable official Year Book issued by Mr. G. H. Knibbs, the Commonwealth statistician—to whom I am indebted for much of my information—I quote the

following paragraph, which is useful at the present period when there are differences at home between the House of Lords and the House of Commons in regard to the right of the former in rejecting Bills :—

"If the House of Representatives passes any proposed law, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives objects in the same or the next session, again passes the proposed law with or without any amendments which have been made, suggested or agreed to by the Senate, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, the Governor-General may dissolve the Senate and the House of Representatives simultaneously. But such dissolution may not take place within six months before the date of the expiration of the House of Representatives by effluxion of time.

"If after such dissolution the House of Representatives again passes the proposed law, with or without any amendments which have been made, suggested or agreed to by the Senate, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, the Governor-General may convene a joint sitting of the members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives.

"The members present at the joint sitting may deliberate and vote together upon the proposed law as last proposed by the House of Representatives, and upon amendments, if any, which have been made therein by one House and not agreed to by the

other, and any such amendments which are affirmed by an absolute majority of the total number of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives shall be taken to have been carried, and if the proposed law, with the amendments, if any, so carried, is affirmed by an absolute majority of the total number of members of the Senate and House of Representatives, it shall be taken to have been duly passed by both Houses of Parliament, and shall be presented to the Governor-General for the King's assent."

As representative of the King, the Governor-General, who receives a salary of £10,000 a year, is Commander-in-Chief of the naval and military forces of the Commonwealth. It is he who sends for the head of a party which has been victorious at the polls and offers him the post of Prime Minister. Ministers of State must not exceed seven in number, and their joint salaries are not allowed to exceed £12,000 a year. The judicial powers of the Commonwealth are vested in a Federal Supreme Court.

Besides the two Houses of the Commonwealth, each State has a Parliament of two Houses. Thus, in Australia, with a population one-tenth that of Great Britain, there are fourteen Houses of Parliament. As most of the members are paid for their services, Australia pays more to her politicians than she is spending on defence. Each State, besides a Governor, has a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly. Except in New South Wales and Queensland, where the Legislative Councillors are nominated for life by the Governor, the Councillors

are elected, though on qualifications somewhat varying in the different States.

To get a proper idea of Australia's advance, local government as well as Commonwealth and State Government must be taken into consideration. In this connection it must be remembered that Australia has paid little attention to what has been done, or is being done, in the older countries of the world. She has proceeded to work out her own destiny. She is untrammelled by custom or usage, with the consequence that she can open up a fresh line of procedure in the administration of local affairs, and make what the rest of the world calls experiments, which would be quite impossible in older lands, where long established, vested interests cannot be easily uprooted.

Government in Australia from the top to the bottom is democratic. Although I am not going to say that I did not hear of cases of alleged corruption, I satisfied myself that Australians taking part in the management of public affairs are, on the whole, as public-spirited and actuated by as high motives as the average man at home who takes part in politics, either imperial or local. The provincial enthusiasm in Australia, whilst having its drawbacks, is producing towns which for beauty are not to be surpassed by any other towns similarly situated and with similar population, in any other region. South Australia, which is unique in its State Government, has the credit of having, in Adelaide, brought the first municipal law into existence as far back as 1839. Municipalities are incorporated very much on the same lines as with us, and, generally speaking, the

rates are small compared with those which are imposed in Great Britain.

For the interests of uniformity there is too much splitting up of towns into separate municipal districts. I have happily forgotten how many different mayors and corporations there are in the city of Sydney. Though I believe in decentralisation, the fact remains that many of these local municipalities are in antagonism one with the other, with the result that there is an absence of desire to work together for the benefit of the city as a whole.

In most of the States there are general rates levied on the unimproved value of land at the rate of not less than 1d., nor more than 2d. in the £1. When a corporation proposes to impose a special rate, a poll may be taken by the ratepayers as to whether the rate shall be imposed or not. Besides the borough councils, each State has shire municipalities not unlike the district councils in England. Provisions are made for the construction of new bodies. Take Victoria as an example. There, any part of the State containing rateable property yielding, upon a rate not exceeding 1s. in the £1, a sum of £1,500, may be constituted as a shire upon the petition of at least fifty inhabitants. Then, any part of the State, not exceeding nine square miles in area, and having no point more than six miles from any other point and containing a population of not fewer than 500, and a rateable value yielding, upon a rate not exceeding 1s. in the £1, a sum of £300, may be constituted a borough upon petition of at least 250 resident householders. Also in Victoria the general

rates must not exceed 2s. 6d. in the £1 of the net annual value. Even with the imposition of extra rates the total must be kept within 2s. 6d.

As regards borrowing powers, the amount raised for permanent works must not exceed ten times the average income of the municipality for the three preceding years. And, of course, if there is a demand made, the decision is to be referred to a poll of the ratepayers.

In Queensland rates are levied on the unimproved capital value and are of two kinds, general and special. The general rate must not be greater than 3d. in the £1 nor less than ½d.; whilst special rates must not exceed 3d. in the £1, but this provision does not include separate rates, special water rates, loan rates, cleansing rates, or tramway rates. Any ratepayers, having not less than one-third of all the votes of the ratepayers within any particular area, may petition for the construction of tramways. A poll is then taken on this direct issue, and, if it is favourable, the Governor sanctions the issue of a Government loan for the purpose of constructing a tramway. The total amount advanced, however, must not exceed £3,000 for every mile constructed. Generally speaking, provisions on very much the same lines are in force in the other States.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE MOTHER STATE

"Then toast with me our happy land,
Where all that's fair prevails.
Our colour's blue and our hearts are true,
In sunny New South Wales."

OLD BUSH SONG.

THE people of New South Wales are rightly proud of their capital city Sydney—one of the most charmingly situated towns in the world, and possessing an individuality which no other Australian city can boast.

But, from the economic point of view, and that of the development of a vast territory, I refuse to be an admirer of one great town, with a population of over six hundred thousand—a beautiful, picturesque, and even fascinating town—when I know that most of the goods of the State are in the shop window.

Sydney has been developed at the expense of other excellent ports in New South Wales, with splendid harbours and fine anchorage—one of the evils incident to State-owned railways, having politics rather than the actual needs of the country to press the expansion. With the consequence that in the busy time of the year—the time for wool exportation and the sending of frozen mutton to Great Britain—there is a congestion of traffic on

the lines converging upon Sydney, causing much inconvenience and depriving other ports of a due share of the export trade.

New South Wales has an area of nearly two hundred millions of acres. Only two and a-half millions are under cultivation for crops, and a fair calculation is that nearly twenty millions of acres in the State are suitable for wheat. There are in New South Wales between 20,000,000 and 30,000,000 acres known to be suitable for wheat growing. Not one-tenth of that area is used for the purpose. Much wheat land is used for grazing and dairying. Though England and the East call for unlimited quantities of wheat, the surplus over local needs averages in these late years a little over 4,000,000 bushels. If one-quarter of the suitable area of New South Wales were devoted to wheat, there would be a surplus, at low averages, of over 50,000,000 bushels available for export.

New South Wales, like other parts of the continent, does not want needy clerks who cannot earn a livelihood at home, and think that a fortune will be theirs if only they emigrate to this sunshiny land, but farmers with money to take up land and labourers with stout hearts and broad backs. In the case of the latter the wages range from 15s. to £1 a week, together with board and lodging. Domestic servants can earn about the same. I rarely went into a private house without hearing some lament from the mistress about the dearth of "helps." I doubt if there is any place in the world where the servant girl gets better wages, and receives more

consideration, than in Australia. The average wage of males in the production of gas and electricity is £123; in shipbuilding, £122; in metal works, £169; and then it drops to £90 for workers in stone, clay and glass; to £80 for workers in wood; to £71 in coachbuilding and saddlery; and to £68 in wool-washing, boiling-down, and other treatment of animal products. In some of the industries where a fair proportion of female labour is employed, the average wage is above the lowest named. But the pay in the clothing and textile industries is the lowest of any group, and probably the female average is not much over £40.

Certainly no other State in the Commonwealth has more diversity of climate, nor a wider scope in the diversity of products. There are big sweeps of downs, mighty rolling uplands, only suitable for grazing, calling for only a limited number of men. But there are areas which need the plough, and there are not the hands to direct it. Wheat, sugar, fruit, dairying, all await considerable development. The question I want to deal with, therefore, is how far New South Wales appeals to the English farmer with money, and the agricultural labourer with no money, who by various means can get shipped out to this huge continent?

Congestion seems a curious word to apply to a country where the population is infinitesimal. Yet there is something in the nature of congestion in farming areas, chiefly because of the limited railway service and the absolute impossibility for a man, in the dairying business for instance, to do any good

unless he is within reach of a line whereby to send his produce to market. And it is little use for anybody to point to fine land if that land is too far from a railway to be commercially valuable. The consequence is that good land, in appropriate districts, costs more than does similar land in England. The Crown has much land, millions of acres, to be sold for from 10s. to £3 an acre, and this can be paid for on the instalment plan, stretching over thirty-six years.

There is no actual free land. I cannot help concluding this is a mistake, especially when Canada, with the offer of a quarter of a square mile to any male immigrant, is acting like a magnet to hundreds of thousands of brawny, agricultural men in the old lands. "Oh," says the New South Wales man, "we are in pressing need of money, and we must charge something for the land." But because the Government does charge something the people do not come, and so the Government does not get the money it wants. Make sections free to the new settler who undertakes to develop, and the State at once has a valuable asset. For as the man prospers he buys more land, he needs implements and a thousand things; he marries and rears a family, and, as the members of it work, extract wealth from the soil, purchase goods, the whole of the community is benefited. It did not strike me that there is sufficient far-sightedness about land settlement in Australia to get population—that is, assuming always that the Australians are genuinely in earnest to make their continent a great haven for immigrants.

Do not imagine, however, that nothing is being done. A great deal is done; but that great deal is small in comparison with the area capable of cultivation. I will go so far as to say there is something approaching very near to "free" land. But the conditions, whilst easily understood by the educated man, must be complicated and confusing to the agricultural labourer in Britain, who cannot see his way to a freehold except through a maze of technicalities which he suspects. He can understand 160 acres free which is Canada's offer. When he is told that in New South Wales he can embark on the conditional purchase system, stretching over three dozen years—a very long time for a man to be shackled, no matter how light the claims may be—or that he can take up a conditional purchase lease, the lease being for fifteen years and the rent only two and a half per cent. on the capital value—true, very little—and that he can turn the lease into a conditional purchase whenever he feels he has the money to pay the instalments—well, the agricultural labourer, such as we know him in Europe, gets fogged and shies. However easy may be the way, however smooth the conditions, however parental the administration, is not the New South Wales Government checking the way to settlement with a lot of needless threads?

Cut them. Go one better than Canada. Say to the world: "Any strong man in the world can have 250 acres free, on the condition that he lives on the land, fences it, and develops it." That would attract; land which is now slumbering would

awaken; population would increase, and town manufactories—which are now up to the high level mark—would expand, and Australians would not so often say to visitors: "We have a better climate than Canada, and we cannot make out why people do not come here instead of going there."

It is true that New South Wales has many millions of acres of land capable of wheat production. But what good is the mass of this land when it is too far from a railway to be financially profitable? Of course, any Government would be nervous, being answerable to the public for their existence, about driving a railway into uninhabited regions in the full expectation that population would go that way. Maybe it would not, and the public, which knows no mercy, would want the heads of the Government who had been squandering their money, and a myriad of "I-told-you-so" politicians would let their voices be heard in the land. It does, however, reveal a certain lack of confidence in the capacity of the soil to win immigrants if—whilst innumerable pamphlets tell of its possibilities: I have two bags stuffed with them—very little is being done to take intending settlers to this soil, even if they came with souls set aflame by the radiant descriptions provided in those pamphlets.

In view of the danger of building a railway, with the chance of no users, the Government has adopted the policy of buying back land from squatters, which is in proximity to existing railways, and now only used for sheep but suitable for mixed farming, slicing it into sections and getting small farmers to

enter into possession. Here one drives into the hot controversy whether it is wise to badger the squatter, the sheep-farmer, with heavy taxation, in order to compel him to split up his land—for taxation is graduated, and the man with a hundred thousand acres pays much more per acre than the man who has only a thousand acres. The lesser annoyance is for the Government to acquire stretches of land, paying a fair price for it, and then re-sell to farmers who want to settle. The theory is that the squatter can go further into the back blocks, whilst it is absolutely necessary for the farmer, who must get his produce to a railway, to be within easy reach of that railway.

Accepting, then, that the Government, after considering all the issues, is right in obtaining possession of pasturage which would be more valuable in carrying people than sheep, we have to see what the immigrant is offered. The first thing for which he should be grateful is that the old squatters cleared the place of trees. Nothing is finer than the dauntlessness of men who have to remove something like a forest before the ground is able to provide sheep food, or be ploughed for wheat. Yet nothing can be so heart-aching as the months and even years of ring-barking, firing, root-digging, hauling, and general clearing before a single penny of recompense comes The grand old settlers did all this. The modern man who wants to go on the land does not care to face it. It is much better to have a Government that will buy the land from those who have done the clearing and give the new settler the oppor-

tunity of entering upon an "improved" farm. Quite frankly I must say the mass of public opinion is in favour of the breaking up of the big estates within easy railway reach and handing them over to many farming families.

Frequently in my inquiries I bumped into a paradox. Here was a continent with untold millions of acres suitable for culture, and yet the cry was "There is no land." And that there was no land was frequently advanced to me as an explanation why the towns have populations altogether out of proportion to the rural districts. And further, I was reminded, whenever big estates were split up into farming sections, there was an instant rush of settlers. Certainly such farms can be obtained on the easiest terms. A small deposit is required, and then, by paying five per cent. per annum on the value, which covers principal and interest, the farmer becomes a freeholder in thirty-eight years. Of course, if the farmer cares he can pay off at a quicker rate, and the sooner the value is paid the sooner he gets released from paying interest. There is a Government Savings Bank which will lend money on easy interest, with the land under mortgage up to two-thirds of the value, so that the capable settler, with a little money in hand, may purchase all the agricultural requisites. Then again, most valuable work is being done by the State experiment farms. The assured rainfall district is a wide belt down the coast, but "dry" farming—raising crops with a minimum of moisture—is making gigantic strides, so that before long it will

be possible to grow wheat a full hundred miles farther inland than is now considered safe.

It will be seen that the poor immigrant has got a long way to travel before he can sit on his horse, let his eye roam round the country, and say, "All this is mine." And it is this long and laborious travel which, I am convinced, stands in the way of agricultural labourers going in great numbers to Australia. Canada offers him a quicker return, for he can, if he likes, take up his 160 free acres wherever he likes. But to the man with money, say £500 to £1,000, I know of no country which has more to offer than New South Wales. He must be a practical farmer, a man willing to work himself, and not be too ambitious about an ultimate great farm, because farm labourers are difficult to get. Many of them are "born tired," and the attractions of the town woo them away from the land, no matter how good the money may be.

I have already mentioned the dearness of land in Australia. Why, in many places land of the quality you could purchase for £20 an acre in England costs as much as £50 an acre in New South Wales! Yet the new-comer, eager, industrious, willing to take the plunge, can find plenty of land, on the fringe of that now under cultivation, at from £2 10s. to £5 an acre, and he has little difficulty in getting advances from the banks. The wise man is he who goes in for mixed farming. There are such farms, fenced, with homesteads, with water-tanks, everything ready for occupation, to be obtained freehold at from £4 to £8 an acre, accord-

ing to quality and nearness to a railway. The farmer who cannot make such a farm pay would probably be a failure at anything to which he turned his hand. Here, as elsewhere, everything depends on a man's personal exertions. Yet I am unacquainted with any farming country where the return is quicker than in this salubrious state of New South Wales.

The closer settlement within the district that is fairly certain to have a twenty-inch rainfall in the year has had much to do with raising the wheat-growing area by a million acres in ten years, and in more than doubling the yield. It is calculated that the cost of raising a crop is 14s. an acre. The average wheat crop in this part of the world is ten bushels to the acre. The lowest price for wheat delivered at the nearest wayside station is 2s. 6d. a bushel. Accordingly, a satisfactory margin of profit remains.

Australia is far away, and at first I was amongst those who thought Australia could never come into competition with Canada in exporting wheat, because it is so much farther from the home market. But the wheat-growing districts in Canada are far from the sea; those in New South Wales are close to it. To bring wheat across the seas from Canada to England is cheaper than from Australia to England. But the outside distance from a New South Wales port where wheat is at present grown is three hundred miles. The centre of the Canadian wheat district, say Regina, is two thousand miles from the Atlantic coast. So, balancing the heavy railway freight and light steamer freight in conveying

Canadian wheat, with the light railway freight in New South Wales and the heavy steamer freight, it comes to this: To carry wheat from Regina to Liverpool costs 1s. 2d. a bushel, whilst to carry wheat from 300 miles outside Sydney to London costs 1s. 1½d. Thus Australian wheat can be landed in England cheaper than can Canadian wheat.

Remembering always that the backbone of Australia's prosperity consists of wool and mutton, it was satisfactory to learn that small farmers were embarking on sheep rearing. I was told officially that there are over ten thousand flocks in the State of five hundred sheep and under. The sheep are a cross, producing merino wool and making good mutton. Then there is dairying, with a splendid market for butter, which, through cold storage, can now be delivered fresh in London. Excellent butter it is! Yet the butter trade is but in its infancy. Also the State has fine coal beds, iron deposits, silver lodes—who has not heard of Broken Hill?—indeed, the yearly output of minerals is well over the value of ten million pounds.

That New South Wales is aboundingly prosperous goes without saying, mainly as the result of long, fat years, with no visitation from drought. The whole State has a population of not much more than a million and a half, and her products are over sixty millions a year. Her trade represents £57 per head of the population, which is nearly double that of any other country in the world. Wages have gone up, but the cost of living has increased. House rent is higher than in London. Clothing in Sydney

costs about a third more than in London. The private wealth of the State is much more distributed than in long-settled countries, and represents about £250 per head. One person in every six is a property holder. Yet only six per cent. of the men have incomes of over £200 a year. The average income of the other ninety-four per cent. of men is just £2 a week. Now that is not much in a country where housekeeping is fairly expensive. The people dress well and neatly. Their pleasures are cheap; but, to use an Americanism, they have "no money to burn."

When I was in Sydney I heard much of what was being done in manufactures. But Australia, within the period necessary for any of us to contemplate, can never become a competitor in general manufactures with other parts of the world. The manufactures have little market but their home market, and they are doing as well now as they can possibly do with the existing population.* Farming is the thing which will lift prosperity ahead. And when the lands suitable for closer settlement are dotted with homesteads, there will still be millions of acres available for sheep. At the present time about one hundred million acres of New South Wales are occupied for pastoral purposes. There are over fifty million sheep feeding in the State, with

* I am well aware that Australian agricultural machinery is exported to the Argentine and that woollens and cheap cloths are exported to the Far East—but the point I make, that Australia must be chiefly dependent on herself for the sale of her manufactures, is not disturbed by these exceptions.

a cash value of about £25,000,000. Formerly only the wool was exported. Now, with cold storage, the mutton can be sent abroad, and five million sheep are slaughtered in this State alone for exportation. Up till a few years ago, when sheep were reared for their wool only, the shorn sheep was often not worth more than 1s. But Great Britain is buying Australian mutton, and the breeders in New South Wales are turning close attention to the growing of a mutton sheep. Very good mutton it is. What effect a couple of months' freezing has on the quality of the mutton, I do not know; but I can say that, with the single exception of Welsh mutton, I have eaten as good mutton in Australia as ever I have done at home.

This State carries more than half the sheep grown in all Australia. The amount of wool the merino sheep bears is astonishing to anyone acquainted only with the shaggy-coated sheep of Great Britain. The wool is tight, thick, and there is sometimes so much of it that the sheep is almost blinded. From its fifty millions of sheep New South Wales can, in an average year, produce 340,000,000 lbs. of wool. Buyers come from all over the world. So prices bound up, and the Australian sheep-breeder smiles as his bank-book bulges.

My readers will have noticed that I am in the habit of judging progress by comparison with what is done elsewhere. Certainly, in applying this standard to New South Wales, the State shows very well indeed. Take the United Kingdom and Canada in instance. A fairly good test is the amount of

trade done per head. Therefore, taking the average during the three years 1906-7-8, we find that the total trade of New South Wales represents £51 12s. 4d. per head of the population, that of the United Kingdom £24 9s. 4d., and that of Canada £17 15s. 7d. Now look at the figures in shipping. In 1908 the tonnage of the vessels entered and cleared at Sydney was over eight million tons, which, although it is only about half that of Liverpool, is half as much again as that of Glasgow. The total value of the agricultural production is over £8,000,000, which works out at an average of over £3 per acre. The amount of butter produced was upwards of 61,000,000 lbs., of which nearly 16,000,000 lbs. was exported to the United Kingdom. In the various factories there were 89,000 employees, and the wages paid were £9,719,000. The value of the products from all industries—agricultural, pastoral, dairy, mining, manufacturing—amounted in 1908 to over £56,000,000. It is interesting to note that one out of every four of the population in New South Wales is a depositor in the savings bank; so we find 442,000 depositors with deposits to the value of £19,022,000, or £43 0s. 9d. per depositor. Whilst each member of the population in Canada sends 63 letters a year, the United Kingdom 84, the people of New South Wales send no fewer than 88 per head a year. On June 30th, 1908, the public debt of New South Wales was £90,307,000, or £55 10s. 5d. per head, but 80 per cent. of this has been expended on reproductive services, which in 1908-9 returned

£2,885,000, or 96 per cent. of the total interest bill. During the last three years £4,332,000 have been transferred from revenue to funds for promotion of closer settlement and for public works. With such a record the people of New South Wales have every reason to be satisfied with their prosperity.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE WORKING MAN

"The wide, wild pastures of old are fading and passing away,
All over the plain are the homes of the men who have come to stay.
I sigh for the good old days in the station wharè again;
But the good new days are better—I would not be heard to complain."

DAVID M'KEE WRIGHT.

THE Australian working man is a good fellow. What he has to do he does well. He has quiet assurance. All is well with him. Whenever he thanks the Almighty it is that he does not live in England. He knows English workers are poor, decrepit, underpaid, and crushed. He has read that in the newspapers. But when you intimate he knows only one side of the picture—that the most skilled artisans in the world are to be found in England, that the general level of the British worker is higher than ever it was, that good wages can be earned, that hundreds of thousands of working men own their own houses and have money in the savings bank—he does not contradict you, but he does not believe you.

An idea exists in Australia that Old England is played out, and that we are decadent. In every colony I have visited the same thing is marked.

And, as a writing man, I feel qualms of conscience. The fact is, we British people are our own severest critics. We are constantly comparing ourselves with other countries, to the disadvantage of ourselves. Some of us occasionally write articles demonstrating how other countries can get ahead of us, and other countries, with the recollection of Britain's great industrial and commercial attainments, take this as confession that we are losing ground.

Now, these other countries—the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand—are constantly shouting what fine places they are. And the average visitor to a colony—generally the recipient of warmest hospitality—is always complimentary; he says nice things, partly because he believes them, and partly to please his hosts; and, discreetly, he says nothing about the things which he fails to admire. Consequently, a disproportionate idea prevails. The condition of Britain is regarded as worse than it is, and the over-sea Britains believe themselves to be much finer than they actually are.

I write this in no spirit of depreciation, but with a desire to secure some sense of proportion. It is unsatisfactory that our kinsmen in far parts of the Empire should nourish the thought that we are played out, and that, knowing we are played out, we look to them for aid. We stand much in need of a Society for the Appreciation of Britain, with the main function of letting the world know the things of which we have reason to be proud.

It is this thought about the poorness of the British working man which colours the minds of the

Australian industrial classes in regard to immigration. The Australian worker is opposed to immigration. Labour M.P.'s are opposed to it. Yet, theoretically, everybody is in favour of it. I found ardent propagandists. The Federal Parliament is constantly debating means whereby Australia may be strengthened by a flow of immigrants. Mr. Fisher, the Leader of the Government, gave point-blank denial to me one morning when, in conversation, I put the question whether the Labour Party was antagonistic to "new chums." I was glad of that official denial, though previous and subsequent investigations inclined my belief that the Australian working man does not want new-comers. I will go so far as to say that, though officially the Labour Party is in favour of encouraging immigration, the leaders would fare badly if they put forward any practical proposal which would lead to the arrival of a hundred thousand new workers every year.

The remarkable thing is that the men who are most opposed to British workers landing in the Commonwealth are British-born, have gained much advantage during the years they have been in Australia, and now clamour for barriers to be raised to prevent other poor British workmen from having the same opportunity. As there is manhood suffrage, and the power is in the hands of the workers, I doubt if any Government dare advance a scheme to draw large fresh populations to Australia.

In business we are all more or less actuated by selfish motives. The Australian working man is as selfish as any of us. Bluntly it may be said that,

recognising he has "a good thing," he does not want anybody to share it. Wages are good, food is cheap, but house-rent and clothing are dear. Wages are fixed by law and hours are strictly regulated. There are arbitration courts to settle disputes. The workers accept the award when it is favourable to them; but the inclination is to snap fingers at it if it favours the employer. Later on I shall have something to say about the working of the arbitration courts. Here let me indicate one or two anomalies which came under my notice—of trifling importance, I admit, but life is made up of trifles. Hotels are under the law affecting workshops, and as I lived in hotels I saw the result. I noted that nothing was done in most hotels to set a bedroom straight after six o'clock in the evening. It was because the employees had ceased to work, and the majority of hotels could not afford a second shift of attendants. If you arrive at an hotel in a small town, say, after seven o'clock at night, it is impossible to get anything in the nature of a hot meal. I remember in one hotel seeing a notice saying that nothing but cold food could be supplied in the evening. At one place I arrived hungry. The landlady made me tea and boiled a couple of eggs—whilst the cook sat in the kitchen reading a novel. At one hotel I stayed at a barmaid had gone into the bar to talk to her friend before her own hours of work began, and both proprietress and barmaid were hauled before the court and fined, because, legally, the barmaid had no right to be on the premises before the stipulated hour.

Of course, cooks ought to be allowed to read novels and barmaids ought not to be overworked. Workmen should receive standard wages. But the tightening of the legal cord is destroying friendly relations between employers and employed—for in Australia, as elsewhere, all employers are not sweaters, and all work-people do not possess all the virtues. The two classes regard each other as enemies. The drift is to make the employer heartless and the employee callous.

For what it is worth, I may be allowed to state that I believe in trade unions. Dock labourers have as much right to combine as doctors or solicitors. But here is a significant instance. The wharfingers who work in Sydney Harbour have got an exceedingly strong union. It is so strong that no shipping company dare employ a non-union worker, or loading and unloading by the harbour-side would come to a standstill. Every wharfinger must be a trade unionist. Very well. The Sydney wharfingers, having won the battle so far, closed their books and would not permit any man to join the union. They created a closed corporation, first, by refusing to allow any man to work alongside them unless he belonged to the union; and then they objected to any new men joining their union. That action, intended to force up wages, had to be smashed in a court of law. The court accepted the right of the unionists to dictate as to the employment of non-unionists, but laid it down that they must keep their books open to permit any qualified worker to join the union. Wharfingering is not a skilled trade,

it is the employment to which most sturdy newcomers would naturally turn. Therefore, the attitude of the Sydney wharfingers to the fresh arrivals: "Go and work elsewhere, or starve, but we do not want you to compete with us," provides better proof than innumerable fine speeches of the way the workers view the immigration question.

No one—certainly not I—can criticise the Australian working man for attending to his own interests. But he really must not talk about the possibilities of his country when he resists the coming of men who may assist in its development. Of course, the trouble is that the Australian is a town dweller. There is not a sufficiently growing agricultural population to be fed with the manufactures of the town, as in Canada. So far as manufactures are concerned, the Australians are living very much on each other, for, with the high wages that obtain, one cannot conceive the Australians being able to send their goods to compete with the goods of countries whose prices will be cheaper because the wages are lower. That hurls one back to the cardinal principle for Australia's salvation: get immigrants, and plenty of them, and settle them on the land.

In all the towns I visited I went to the factories. Sometimes I wanted to go; more often I was pressingly invited. Remembering how new Australia is, they were all creditable. But when I was taken to a twopenny-halfpenny place to admire very ordinary manufactories, after I had seen hundreds of better places in other parts of the globe, and was told

that the system was the best in the world—well, it was embarrassing. Except in the manufacture of some agricultural appliances, I saw nothing being made that I have not seen made as well elsewhere.

But the conditions under which men and women worked were certainly superior to those in most countries I have visited. To my brain jumps remembrance of particular cases in England and America, where the conditions of the factories are superior to anything I saw in Australia. General conclusions, however, must not be drawn from particular instances. Therefore, taking the broad view, I say that the factories and workshops are, in build, lighting, guarding of dangerous parts of machinery and sanitary conditions, decidedly an improvement on the usual conditions in the Old World.

At Sydney I heard whispers about "sweating." So I made it my business to visit several "sweat shops" where cheap clothing is made, chiefly by women. One of my correspondents told me I would see a state of things worse than I had witnessed in the East-end of London. I got a factory inspector to show me the "sweat shops." I was surprised. There was no comparison whatever. The crowded, malodorous state of some of the tailoring dens in the East-end has no counterpart in Sydney. In the hot months—and the heat of Sydney can wither all strength out of your sinews—it must be uncomfortable. Yet I saw no overcrowding. There was plenty of ventilation; the women were drawing

fair wages, and they lacked those sad, weary-eyed, pasty-cheeked characteristics which are so sorrowful to note amongst the bedraggled victims of the "sweat shop" in East London.

In quick summary, the Australian worker is healthier-looking than the British worker. He has shorter hours, and he earns more money. In the shearing of sheep and the preparing of mutton the Briton is "not in it" with the Australian. But in all other work it was never my fortune to come across any evidence that the Australian is quicker or turns out a better article than his brother worker in the "Old Country."

## CHAPTER XVII

### SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION—THE STATE AS PARENT

"There is nothing but the human
Touch can heal the human woe."
VICTOR J. DALEY.

COMPARED with the four and a half millions population of the Australian continent, the number of children attending the primary schools is not large, just under three-quarters of a million. Which is one of the proofs that the birth-rate is far behind what it ought to be in a new country. The original settlers had families of ten or a dozen children. The modern Australian contents himself, and particularly herself, with one or two children.

Excepting Western Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania, the Commonwealth now shows a decreasing school attendance, consequent on a falling birth-rate—one of the saddest and most significant things which presses upon the mind when thinking of the future of this too sparsely inhabited continent.

But the scheme of instruction, though varying somewhat in the different States, is broad and democratic, compulsory and undenominational; and there are plenty of people who ascribe the existing slackness in religious life, the lax morality, and the neglect of bringing families into the world—causing

much concern to good Australians—to the absence of dogmatic religious teaching.

Recognising, however, that in some areas families are far spread from each other, the way in which the State Governments have battled with difficulties and overcome them has been courageous.

The inefficacy of small schools has long been recognised, and the endeavour is to centralise—to have, say, one good school in a district rather than several small and badly equipped schools scattered around. In the towns there is little difficulty, and the education, generally, is quite up to the level of that given in other enlightened communities, and very much on the same lines. The trouble has been in regard to the remote districts, sheep stations which are frequently several miles from each other, and on which maybe there are only a couple of families. So provisional schools are established to meet the requirements of cases where the number of scholars is under a dozen, though when the attendance goes beyond that number a public school, with a qualified teacher, is invariably provided. But so tiny are the families of those parts, that often the authorities are not justified in starting even a provisional school. Then teachers visit the different districts on alternate days, whilst in the thinnest areas an itinerant teacher goes the round of certain homesteads.

New South Wales has even established a travelling school, consisting of a van. The teacher takes a tent with him, pitches it, hauls out the books from the van, a dose of instruction is given, the tent is

packed away, and the van moves on to another place. This arrangement is primitive and unsatisfactory, but it is as much as can be expected in a land where there are mighty plains over which you can ride for days without catching a glimpse of a habitation.

A fine thing about the Australian system of education is that all the requisite steps are provided to enable a clever pupil to march straight from the primary school to the university. But this is not general. Queensland has no distinctly secondary schools. Though there are technical schools in Western Australia, there are no genuine secondary schools. Tasmania has not provided for the intermediate instruction which should come between that given at a primary school and that which is to be received at a university. The other States have made provision. Of course, in all States there is a full appreciation of its desirability, and only the matter of pence and pounds stands in the way. Training in agricultural subjects is eminently necessary, and though there is plenty of room for improvement, there is at present a very healthy move in the direction of instructing lads how to go upon the land as farmers. Not only are there perambulating teachers of agriculture attending the State schools, but agricultural colleges are provided and appreciated. Also training colleges for teachers are springing up in the States. Thus satisfactory foundations are being laid for sound instruction.

Now for a few points of detail: for I want to show that, though there are points of defect in Australian

education, the people of the country are determined to do what they can to equip the rising generation with the knowledge necessary to make them competent citizens. In New South Wales and Tasmania, where the children live some distance from the school-house, they are carried free over the Government railways. In Victoria, instead of free travelling, the State makes a contribution of threepence or fourpence a day toward travelling expenses, dependent, of course, on satisfactory attendance. In some rural places a free conveyance is provided for the children. Good attendance, as in England, does not mean a certain attendance, no matter how young the child is, nor how far it lives from a school. The requisite attendance differs in different States. But it all depends on the school radius and the age of the child. Take the case of Victoria, where the child must attend 75 per cent. of the school-days when it is under seven years of age, and lives within a mile of the school; or two miles if it is between seven and nine years; or two and a half miles between nine and eleven; whilst all children over eleven years of age must make 75 per cent. of attendances if they live within three miles of the school. A sensible plan, and not putting too great a physical strain on toddlers under seven years of age. In Western Australia much the same radius is adopted, but there regular attendance means being present every day that the school is open.

To deal with the smallest children, free kindergartens have been established, first in Sydney and then in Adelaide—chiefly maintained by private

subscription, though the Governments make limited grants. I shall always remember a very happy morning I spent in Adelaide visiting free kindergarten schools, just converted cottages, and seeing the children, tidy and clean, though coming from poor parents, noting the delight of the youngsters, the kindliness of the teachers, and the enthusiasm of the ladies who make this particular branch of education their special care.

Another thing I admired was the attention paid to manual training. The clamour for purely scholastic instruction which swept over the English-speaking nations some forty years ago has been softening of late years. Education consists in much more than turning out millions of young people who are ashamed to dirty their hands with toil, and jostle one another in the market for clerks and typewriters. Australia, whilst not behindhand in general curriculum, has rightly laid hold of the principle that manual training may be more serviceable than some of the things now being taught. I am not going to say I came across anything to arouse ecstasy. The chief point is that a start has been made, and education would travel fast if the necessary money could be obtained from the Government.

New South Wales leads the way. In all the big schools I visited not only were gardening and agriculture generally given a prominent position, but carpentering, weaving, and metal-work were taught; all most valuable to develop particular talents, and, maybe, turn a lad into a useful craftsman, whereas, without such training, he would have drifted into

the army of clerks, of which there are already too many in Australia, as in other countries. Cookery is taught in some of the schools, a necessary accomplishment for girls, because it cannot be fairly declared that the ordinary household cookery in Australia is anything of which anybody has any reason to be proud.

The method of school control is not the same in all the States. The Government is primarily responsible, with the Education Minister in charge; but he naturally delegates administration to local boards. In New South Wales these boards are nominated by the Governor, but in all other States the parents have the deciding voice in choice. But then comes secondary education, provided in some States by high schools, business colleges, technical schools, and agricultural colleges. Innumerable scholarships and bursaries are provided, and so the country lad has a chance to compete with the town lad. A clever country boy in New South Wales, winning a scholarship, gets three years' superior education for nothing and £30 a year towards his maintenance. In Victoria, though there are no high schools, there are continuation and technical schools, which fairly well cover the ground. Forty scholarships a year, moreover, are provided to help lads on to obtain degrees in mining or agriculture at the university. Any boy under fourteen and a half years can compete, and if the father's income is less than £250 a year, then the State contributes to the lad's travelling expenses and cost of lodgings. The private business colleges to be found in the big

towns, though doing good work, are still a long way behind the commercial colleges which are now to be found all over Europe.

Let it ever be remembered to the honour of the sturdy men of fifty and sixty years ago, who, just when the first rush of immigration came to Australia, saw the needs of the future, and proceeded to lay the foundations for universities. It would be absurd to compare the universities in Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide with our older institutions; but they stand very well in comparison with some of our newer universities. In appliances they are certainly quite up to date. Of course, the cry of the professors with whom I talked the matter over was for more money, more money—their work was crippled through want of money. And, whilst excellent service has been done by old settlers who want those who come after to be well provisioned with knowledge, there still remains a stratum of prosperous, bull-headed, stubborn old fellows who look upon university education as so much waste of time. The head of one of the universities told me that he was one of a deputation which waited upon an Education Minister to plead for more money. They were startled, on entering the room, by the minister greeting them: "I'm glad to see you, gentlemen, but I may tell you before you begin talking that this Government don't care a d—— for science." Australia is supposed to be drifting toward Socialism; but the same professor told me that, as a rule, the Labour members of the State Parliament were more sympathetic toward university

extension than were those who, in their earlier years, had been benefited by a better education.

Quite naturally, in a new nation working out its destiny on lines of its own, the whole trend is toward practical instead of academic subjects. There are valuable endowments and the establishment of elaborate laboratories. Female as well as male students are admitted to the courses of lectures. Besides general studies there are medical schools, schools of engineering, mining schools, courses in agriculture, schools of dentistry. The fees are moderate; the scholarships are many. Queensland and Western Australia are still without universities, but it can only be a matter of limited time before they also raise their educational shoulders to the level of their neighbouring States.

Now a word or two of criticism. The salaries paid the professors at the universities, and, indeed, the teaching profession in Australia generally, are better than in England, but not so good as in the United States. It was my delight to meet not only at the universities. but in their private homes, many of the men who are giving their best to Australia. They were men of high university attainments at home, and if it were not for the sincere love of learning they have in their hearts it would be difficult to understand why they continue the life. Now and then I heard native-born Australians grumble about the importation of professors from home. They ought to be exceedingly grateful. Even if Australia could give the foundation of learning which can be obtained at the British universities, how can they

expect Australians—who have not taken to breeding a purely literary, academic, and scientific class—to give their abilities for small pay when there are so many other walks of life where the recompense is greater?

Another point. Whilst I can well understand so much educational energy being directed to practical and see-able things, the limited instruction given in Australia in history and geography is lamentable. Full of admiration though I be for the work done in other directions, I doubt if there is any civilised nation on the face of this earth so ignorant concerning geography and history as the Australians. "The past is dead—what have we got to do with it?" is the attitude of the average man towards history. He has yet to be taught that even a young nation like Australia has much to learn from the life-history of other nations. Having but a superficial acquaintance with ancient history, and knowing virtually nothing of modern history, and having the most ludicrous ideas about the geography of other lands and their possibilities, the Australian does not do himself justice. For, naturally a fair-minded man, he misses the very things which would enable him to secure a judicious and balanced idea about the place Australia happens to hold in the congress of nations at the present time. Travelled Australians, with a better and wider outlook, mourn grievously that the majority of their countrymen should so often put themselves in a false and stupid position, not because they want to be ignorant about other lands, but because the people, as a whole, have not

yet grasped the use of a proper study of history and geography.

Nowhere in the world do you find the principle of the State in the capacity of parent advanced to such an extent as in South Australia. Here the State has come to recognise that the child belongs to it, that it must feed, nurse, clothe, and educate it. Youngsters who misconduct themselves are taken before a youthful offenders' court, absolutely independent of the ordinary police court, and in the serious cases sent to a reformatory. That is just the same as in other countries. Where South Australia is different from other lands is that inspectors go about the poorer districts, and when they find drunken or harsh parents, or immoral homes, the authorities have the right to take the children away. They are not put into union workhouses, but are invariably boarded out with some respectable family in the country, and the father is called upon to contribute. Generally he does, but often he skips into another State, where the expense of pursuing him would be too great. The State undertakes the function of guardian, though, if the parents improve the home, there is a prospect of the child or children being allowed to return. There is, however, little of this, and the State stands in the position of parent until the wards reach twenty-one years. The time arrives, when the child approaches fourteen years of age, and is likely to begin earning money, for some relative to display a sudden desire for the boy or girl to leave their foster-parents and live at home. The State will not allow anything of the kind if

there is the slightest suspicion that it is the earnings the relative is after.

The children above fourteen years of age become "service children." They are taken from the homes of their foster-parents who have received payment, and are put with families who feed, clothe, and keep them in return for service, the lad working about a farm or learning a trade, or assisting in a shop, and the girls generally acting as domestic servants. In ordinary circumstances the State children receive their freedom at eighteen. But that is only if the State parent, through its inspectors, is quite certain that they have the moral qualities to enable them to stand alone and begin the battle of life. The State has the right, and it is frequently exercised in the case of girls, to extend the period of authority by single years up to the age of twenty-one, when the State relinquishes all authority.

Recently there has been established a private fund intended to help clever children, who, having qualities to fit them for something different from working on a farm, can proceed even to the university and adopt one of the higher professions.

Now, all this has its origin in the most Christian of motives. The men and women who, under the authority of the Government, are given control of these State children, are as noble-minded as any it has ever been my privilege to meet. They care for the children as though they were their own. Often the children, drawn from an unsavoury home circle, are difficult to deal with; they lie, are careless, and the girls are without any idea of household work.

Yet kindness has done much, and, from all I could learn, the foster-parents, the people with whom the children are boarded out, care for their charges with genuine love. There are frequent applications to adopt the children. But the State does not part with its own authority unless the children have lived in the family for many years and there is sufficient evidence of real affection.

The State looks after the material welfare of the child from its very birth. In European countries there are maternity homes, where poor women may go. They and the children are generally turned out a fortnight or so after the birth. If the home to which the woman goes is wretched, there is more than a possibility that the child will not survive six months, especially if the mother has to earn a livelihood and the child has to be reared on other than its natural food. In South Australia, if the woman is poor, the State will keep her and the child for six months, with free medical attendance and plenty of instruction about children, on the one condition that the child is given its natural food from the breast.

There are no slums in South Australia. Human nature, however, is very much the same all the world over, and there are callous and neglectful parents. Because there are such parents is no reason why the child should suffer; every baby is a new immigrant into the State, and the State wants it to be healthy and strong, well fed, with good surroundings and fair opportunities put in its way. So the State says to the parent: "If you are poor we help the mother and child. If you are neglectful of your duties we

shall take the child from you; you will have no more voice as to its upbringing than as though you were a stranger. If we do not think your influence is for good we will not tell you where the child is, so you cannot write. We will force you to pay, but if you escape us we will still take care of the child, for it is ours till it reaches twenty-one years."

The beautiful humanitarian thoughts behind all this will touch the heart of anyone. Yet, when all this has been said, another thought sprouts: "Are you interfering with parental responsibility? Are you playing into the hands of the wastrel, who refuses to fulfil his duties as a father—struggling, striving, proving the manhood that is in him, in order to feed his bairns—because he knows and may be glad that by neglect and ill-treatment he will lose his children to his own advantage?"

That the noble work to help the helpless may have its effect in weakening the appreciation of parental responsibility is undoubted. Such responsibility, filial affection, the duties of family life, do not occupy the place in Australia which you might expect to find amongst people with ideals. Concurrently, therefore, with the movement to give all children a fair chance in the world, a little more might be done toward inculcating the principles of responsibility into the minds of parents who are bringing a family into the world. It may be that fostering the theory, "the State is the parent," does harm amongst that very class who ought to, but do not always. know their duty.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EXPERIMENTS IN LABOUR LEGISLATION

"Who can say, 'Thus far, no farther,' to the tide of his own nature?
Who can mould the spirit's fashion to the counsel of his will?
Square his being by enactment—shape his soul to legislature—
Be himself his law of living, his own art of good and ill?"

BRUNTON STEPHENS.

LEAVING all comment on one side, I propose to give some sort of résumé of the position of Australian labour in the eyes of the Australian law.

The people of the Commonwealth, with no involved conditions of society, with no customs which have the powers of legal enactment, are engaged in a great industrial experiment. It is a land of workers; the leisured class is small to insignificance. The politicians are dependent on the democratic vote for their return to the State Parliaments, which pass the laws applicable to capital and labour in their respective spheres. All the State Governments are "advanced," and—from the British standard—with strong leanings toward Socialism. Anyway, no Government could expect to hold office if its first and chief interest were not to benefit the working man.

The result is that the rules of the trade unions have become the law, and there is not an industry

which is not hedged with regulations concerning conditions of work, hours, and wages to be paid. The eight-hours' day is operative throughout the Commonwealth, and both employer and employed are liable to punishment if longer hours are worked. Labour Governments come and go, but, whoever is in power, the working man's vote has to be nursed, and during the last ten years stacks of statutes have been passed Wages Boards and Arbitration Courts have been set up. The eight-hours' day sometimes means forty-eight hours a week, but as the workman wants to get away at noon on Saturday, it is often forty-four hours, and in some cases it is only forty-two hours. Shops, except in Tasmania, come within the purview of the eight-hours' plan, even to small shops looked after by the proprietor and members of his family. There is a provision in Victoria, however, that shops where there is not more than one assistant, paid or not paid, shall be allowed to remain open for two hours a day longer than other shops where more assistants are engaged. The law throughout the Commonwealth is that all shops, save those I have just mentioned, close at six o'clock each night on four days of the week, ten o'clock on one day (in South Australia it is nine o'clock), and one o'clock in the afternoon on one day, thus providing a half-holiday. Accordingly, after six o'clock in the evening scarcely a shop is to be found open. Hotels and public-houses are allowed to remain open much later—though no employee must work longer than eight hours—with the consequence that a cynical friend was able to remark, whilst we were strolling

through the Melbourne streets: "You see a poor woman cannot buy a loaf of bread after six o'clock, but her husband can buy drink up till ten o'clock."

Most of the Factory Acts are based on British legislation. As there is a strong feeling against Asiatic labour, it is the law in some States that the employment of one Chinese constitutes a factory, whilst the employment of seven whites brings the place within that definition. The Chinese have got a good deal of the cheap furniture business in their hands; and I found, on visiting some of their workshops, that they are compelled to stamp their furniture and so disclose the fact that it has been made by Chinese labour. Women and boys are not allowed to work near dangerous machinery. To prevent the state of things which has grown up in some millinery establishments in the old countries, the minimum wage is 2s. 6d. a week, and no premium is allowed to be paid by female apprentices and improvers. In most factories the earliest age at which a woman is allowed to work is eighteen years, and in at least two of the States—New South Wales and Western Australia—women are not allowed to work within four weeks after childbirth.

Wages Boards exist in most of the States. As there is the possibility of different standards being set up in neighbouring States, there is a Commonwealth Arbitration Court to deal with matters which affect two or more States. The Wages Board system, started in Victoria in 1896 to deal with the trades of butchering, bread-making, furniture, and clothing, has been extended to include practically every

trade. A Wages Board consists of from four to ten persons, employers and employed being equally represented. The stipulation is that the members must have been actively engaged in their trade up to their appointment, a provision to keep out the hired glib spokesman. The boards are nominated, though in cases of objection an elected representative may be sent. This does not apply to the Furniture Board, which is nominated outright in order to keep the Chinese in check. Each board, holding office for three years, nominates its own independent chairman, who is appointed by the minister in charge of the Labour Department. It therefore follows that the independent chairman is invariably sympathetic toward the employees. To quote from the Commonwealth official publication, a board has "power to determine the lowest wages, prices, or rates to be paid to persons, or classes of persons, coming within the Act for wholly or partly preparing, manufacturing, or repairing articles, and for other services rendered, and may fix special rates for aged, infirm, and slow workers." The board fixes the hours, decides the wages to be paid, and in South Australia limits the number of apprentices. When a workman is old, slow, or infirm he may seek a licence from the Chief Inspector of Factories, to be renewed each twelve months, to work for a lower wage than the minimum rate. The trade unions, however, are not favourable to this kind of workman. So what generally happens is that when an artisan falls below the ability to earn the minimum wage he is squeezed out of his trade altogether. The

determination of a Wages Board remains operative until the board alters it, or it is altered by the Court of Appeal; and, when applied to a town or city, its operation generally extends to workers ten miles beyond the municipal radius.

To settle industrial disputes the compulsory arbitration laws of Australia can be put in force. Employers and employed may settle disputes by agreement, as is frequently done in Britain, but they must be registered. Then the awards are supposed to be as binding as though they were Acts of Parliament. In cases of non-agreement, the dispute is adjudicated upon by the Arbitration Court, which consists of a judge of the High Court in cases of inter-State importance, and a judge of the Supreme Court in State disputes. In the latter case he has two aids, representing the employers and employed respectively.

This Arbitration Court lays down the law, and commands disputants concerning their relationships. One party, employers, or workpeople through their trade union, may apply to the court for a difference not covered by the Wages Board to be settled by the Arbitration Court. For there is nothing outside the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. Wages, hours, privileges, duties, preferential employment, dismissal, or non-employment of particular persons —such as the refusal of an employer to keep in his service an agitator—can be brought before the court, and if the judge decides the agitator is to be employed, the employer must give him work or be severely penalised.

Besides all this, laws have been passed abolishing the employment of Pacific Islanders in the sugar plantations. Certain stiff educational tests are applied to immigrants, with the direct intention to exclude Asiatic and, indeed, all coloured peoples from the continent. As I stated in a previous chapter, no workman of another country, an Englishman, say, is allowed admission into Australia if, before leaving home, he has entered into a contract with an Australian employer—unless the Minister of External Affairs approves of the contract. Excepting in the case of British subjects, this means that the Minister "must be satisfied that there exists a difficulty of obtaining a worker of equal skill and ability in the Commonwealth." The consequence is that less than a thousand workers a year are admitted into all Australia to work under contract, and the majority are agricultural labourers introduced into Queensland to work in the sugar plantations.

So much for a general résumé of the conditions of labour in most of the trades. Now let us look to see how the whole thing works. That wages are higher, hours shorter, and conditions of employment vastly improved, may go without saying. But immigration is not expedited thereby, for except under special circumstances the skilled British artisan is not allowed to land in Australia if before leaving home he has taken the precaution to have a definite job to turn to when he lands. But let him arrive without any knowledge how or where he is going to earn a living, and he is granted permission!

What British workman of skill is going to spend money to go out to Australia on terms such as these? He does not go. The Australian will tell you the strict law against contract labour is to prevent employers flooding the market with cheap workers, and thus, by economic pressure, forcing down wages. But no contract labour is allowed, even when the immigrant has an agreement whereby he shall receive the standard rate or even more. The whole effect, and it is intentional, is to keep skilled workmen of Britain and other lands out of Australia, by refusing them admission if they dare to come with a contract in their pockets to receive certain pay for certain labour. In the Commonwealth Year Book for 1909 the latest statistics given are for 1907, and from these I find forty-seven British and thirteen Germans were admitted to labour as artisans under contract! I quite recognise that Australia to-day is in need of agriculturists rather than men who are industrially skilful, but in 1907 only 912 farm labourers were allowed to land in Australia with a knowledge that they had definite work to go to!

The theory of the minimum wage is excellent. Every labourer is worthy of his hire, and it may readily be conceded that the thought in the minds of those who agitated for Wages Boards was to save the workpeople in certain trades from slipping into the grip of the sweater. From the investigations I made, it became clear that the tendency is for the minimum and maximum wage to be the same. It is quite true that in some factories all the employees were drawing more than the minimum wage, be-

cause the employers, having special work, very naturally wanted to attract the best men. So exceptions can be found. But as labour is not overplentiful in Australia, and the minimum is fixed by law, the only way in which an employer can get straight is by keeping down the wages of his better men. Say the minimum wage is 10s. a day. He cannot pay less, though some of the men are barely worth it; so the man who is worth 12s. is kept down to 10s. Of course, the matter is one of controversy, and therefore I will be content with saying that my own personal conclusion was that the fixing of a minimum wage produced a contentment in the worker, which, though pleasant enough, deprived him of the ambition which might lead him on to do much better.

On the whole, the Wages Boards do their work smoothly and harmoniously. Running over the statistics of a number of decisions, the satisfactory thing was to find so many of them were arrived at unanimously. As to their effect, they have certainly checked sweating, particularly in the clothing trade, and trades in which women are largely employed. But the decisions do not apply to home workers, and therefore elderly men, unable to earn a minimum man's wage in a factory, take to work at poor pay in their homes, and thus, to a considerable extent, have thrown the women home workers out of employment altogether. The boards have not increased employment, but, as I have shown, they have certainly had some influence in lifting the wages of the average worker.

That the object of the Wages Boards and Arbitration Courts, to improve the condition of the workers and to secure a settlement of disputes without the violent arbitrament of strikes, has been attained in some measure is undoubted. But the unfortunate fact remains that the law can be operative against an employer if he refuses to comply with an award, whilst it is practically inoperative in the case of workmen who ignore it. Also, various cases have proved that the trade unions, whilst hailing with approval awards for the benefit of their members, ignore them and denounce the Arbitration Courts when the decisions have been given against them. That there is interference with personal liberty is demonstrated by the fact that the courts insist on preferential treatment being given to trade unionists. The unions have made it difficult for new members to join, and so, by creating a sort of close corporation and restricting the output, have raised wages. Then there is pressure by the unions in favour of "the last to come the first to go"; that is, that the latest comers, no matter how skilled they be, should be the first dismissed when it is proposed to reduce the number of employees.

Very stringent are the regulations preventing any man doing any work which does not come within the strictest definition of his particular employment. A groom is not allowed to make any repairs in a piece of harness, however slight. Here is a Sydney case which will show to what extremes the unions occasionally carry their demands. In the Australian maritime service are three kinds of trade—"deep

sea," or foreign; "inter-colonial," mainly between different States; and "coastal," that is, from one port in a State to another port in the same State. The pay of seamen varies, that for "deep sea" sailors being lower than the others. Then, in the unloading or loading of the different kinds of ships by the quays of Sydney, the Wharf Labourers' Union insist on different rates of pay. Men working on coastal or inter-colonial boats get 1s. an hour, and those working on foreign boats get 1s. 3d. an hour. There is a good deal of trade done with Fiji and the surrounding archipelago, and this trade was classed as "deep sea," and the wharf labourers received 1s. 3d. an hour. The shipowners, having to yield to this, wanted the seamen to be paid at "deep sea" rates, just the same as other "deep sea" boats. "Oh, no," said the union, "in rating these vessels we insist they be treated as though they belonged to the inter-colonial or coastal trade, in which the pay is higher than in 'deep sea' boats." The case was carried to the Arbitration Court, and the court decided in favour of the will of the union. Thus it comes about that, as for the purposes of the seamen these boats are ranked as "inter-colonial," but for the wharf labourers' purposes as "deep sea" boats, the shipowners have to pay on the higher scale in each case.

Innumerable cases came to my notice that the law of the Australian States, not always consistent, is very much what the trade unions want it to be. There was the case of the Hunter Steamship Company. The union workers "bossed the show," and

when the company did not do as these men desired, a picnic was arranged just when the men were needed to advance work. To prevent interruptions like this the company proposed to engage constant men at a weekly wage; they were willing to pay union men £3 a week. The union officials refused. Then the company engaged men from outside. The Arbitration Court decided that the local trade unionists must be reinstated, and the company was obliged to discharge the men they had engaged to work by the week. Then there are the cases of the American ships, *Resolute* and *Andromeda*. The *Resolute* arrived in Sydney harbour with timber, and the captain employed his own crew to discharge it into lighters. Action was taken against him for acting as a stevedore, and the clause of the Arbitration Act governing stevedores set forth "that all cargo must be discharged by union labour at union rates." The court, however, decided the captain was not a stevedore, and the summons was dismissed. A week or two later along came the *Andromeda*, and the captain, undertaking to pay his men a little more for the work, employed the crew to discharge the cargo into lighters. He was summonsed. He ignored it, whereupon, although the two cases were on all fours, the Arbitration Court fined him £50. He was also fined £5 for not employing union labour; he was commanded to cease unloading until he engaged unionists and paid them union rates. This he was compelled to obey. An oil company engaged six youths, of ages varying from eighteen to twenty-one years, to see to the

tightening of hoops on the casks. Simple and elementary though this work was, the Arbitration Court decreed that the hammering was cooperage work, must be done by coopers, and therefore the company was fined, the boys were discharged, and coopers at £3 a week had to be engaged to do boys' work.

Men who are not trade unionists have the utmost difficulty in getting employment. Employers have been called upon to dismiss non-unionists who are good men, and then when, for the sake of peace, the men have expressed their willingness to join the union, they have been told the books are closed. Again I say I am personally in favour of trade unions. I believe they have done an enormous amount of good in raising the status and wages of the workers. I believe it is unfair for a non-unionist to get advantages which he personally has done nothing to secure. But I am at a loss to understand the spite shown in too many cases in Australia, or why an Arbitration Court, with delegated powers, should make laws concerning labour, give decisions without allowing the persons cited to defend themselves, nor have its decisions revised or even reviewed by any other authority.

The preference clause in the New South Wales Act amounts to the law of the land being utilised for furthering political purposes rather than to improve industrial conditions. The trade unions practically dictate the labour laws Yet only a small minority of the working men of Australia belong to the trade unions. Things go even further, for

an employer is not always allowed to decide what workman he should employ. I heard of a case: A Mr. Wildman wanted a workman. Two applied. He chose the non-unionist, because, in his opinion, he was a more competent man than the unionist. For doing this he was fined £2 and £2 2s. costs, and the arbitration judge told him it was the Arbitration Court, and not the employer, who must decide as to the relative competency of employees.

The consequence of all this legislation is to create the unpleasantest kind of relationship between employers and employed. I met lots of typical representatives of both classes, really fair-minded, courteous men, until the conversation turned on wages, and then I saw a bitterness, a vindictiveness, almost a savagery, between class and class, which, happily, in Great Britain, with all our industrial complications, we are very little acquainted with. These compulsory arbitration courts, having for their object the amicable settlement of differences, have promoted strife. They generally operate against the employers because they are the employers. The men at the head of great concerns, whilst appreciative of their men, feel they are harassed, and many of them were pessimistic in telling me their woes. No doubt some took a too unfavourable view of the prospects. But it is a bad thing for the industrial development of a country when the men who have carried the development to the position it holds lose heart, are moody, and miss no opportunity to warn the visitor against being too much impressed with stories about the abounding prosperity of the land.

## CHAPTER XIX

### A WHITE AUSTRALIA

"May this, thy last-born infant, then arise,
To glad the heart and greet thy parent eyes;
And Australasia float, with flag unfurl'd,
A new Britannia in another world."

WILLIAM CHARLES WENTWORTH.

THE vision of the Australian continent peopled entirely with a white race is magnificent. The turning of the vision into a reality is the ambition of all Australians. True, they are far removed from those parts of the world where the white races originated, and are next door to races which are yellow, brown, and black. Therefore we have the striking phenomenon of a race from the west being implanted in the east. Time and distance are considerably obliterated in these days of telegraphs and fast steamers. Geographically, however, Australia is an oriental country.

In some other parts of the world I have encountered splashes of racial antipathy amongst the whites against the blacks. Nowhere, however, have I remarked so much as in Australia how practically the entire population is pledged to resist people from Asia becoming settlers in Australia. The objections are quite plain, and are frankly stated. There is the racial prejudice, the fear that the whites would

deteriorate if there were intermarriage. Chiefly the resistance is economic. The democracy of Australia have quite definite opinions on this matter. They have been drawn from European countries, and have in the main come from a class ill-rewarded in the matter of wages. They have settled chiefly along the southern fringe of the continent, and principally in the south-east corner, where the climatic conditions are favourable. Life is pleasant; the future is regarded with hopefulness. There are tariff walls erected to hinder the cheaply produced goods of Europe having free access into the Commonwealth to under-sell articles of Australian manufacture, and so, by the force of competition, pull down prices.

Having taken this action against the lesser-paid whites of Europe, the Australian feels he would be committing industrial suicide if his ports were thrown open to the Chinese, Japanese, the Hindus, and the races of the Pacific. The Asiatic will work longer hours than the white man, and he will be content with a reward which, to the white, would be below the line of decent living. The Australian, accordingly, holds tight to the intention to resist by every means in his power any part of his country passing into the possession of Asiatics.

But the possibility of an invasion of dusky peoples is something like a nightmare in the minds of Australian statesmen. They are animated by the fine ideal of making Australia a new white-man's land like North America. They know that the teeming millions of China are streaming into every part of the world that is open to them, and that the

Japanese, with islands already too crowded with population, are looking for outlets. They know quite well that avaricious eyes are cast upon northern Australia. Restrictive legislation in regard to immigrants is severe, in order to prevent Asiatics entering the country. Yet at the back of most minds is the recognition that the day may come when one of these races, say the Japanese, so well equipped in military power, possessing so expert and well manned a navy, may make a giant endeavour to secure the northern portion of the Commonwealth.

Let us look the situation straight in the face. The older countries of the world, including Japan and China, are overcrowded. Just as England is sending its sons to settle in other parts of the world, and so extending and strengthening the Empire, the Japanese with their new-born ambitions, with the desire to become a colonial power in the East, are undoubtedly determined, one of these days and before long, to find possessions elsewhere.

Now, Australia has but a drop of the population of the world. It is possible to travel hundreds of miles and never encounter a white man. The great northern stretch of the country, uninhabited, is but waiting for labour to burst into fruitfulness. What will the Australian people say when the question is put to them, "As you are not developing this region, what right have you to prohibit other people from developing it? It was not your land in the first instance. You obtained it by conquest that was peaceful. What can you do to resist conquest by force of arms? Who are you to say to the world,

'Let other peoples crowd together and be hungry owing to congestion of population, live cramped and struggling lives, but we, although doing practically nothing to develop our own resources, do not want anybody else to come in and develop the resources of a part of the world not given to us but given to the human race?'"

That is the problem which Australia has to solve. It is no good for the Australian, be he never so patriotic, to talk about the advantages of a "white Australia" unless he makes it a white Australia. A combination of war and economic circumstances will force him, perhaps sooner than he anticipates, to cease playing the part which is described by many as that of the dog in the manger.

I do not so describe his attitude. I recognise his ambition, and I appreciate his difficulties. Yet the nut has to be cracked, and unless he cracks it, it will be cracked for him. A "white Australia" is magnificent. At present there is no white Australia. What is to be done?

Of course, I recognise that, if an endeavour were made by an Asiatic power to annex a portion of the northern territory, Australia would have the full force of the British fleet to resist the invaders. Let us not be unconscious, however, of the possibility that at some time Great Britain may have serious trouble in another part of the world. What will Australia do in that dread day if an Asiatic power took advantage of England's troubles elsewhere to take possession of part of Australia? I know how brave the Australians are, and I know what is being done for

coast defence. Conceive, however, Japan's warships arriving in the north and guarding the way for Japanese emigrant boats bringing thousands upon thousands of Japanese into the north. How could Australia turn them out? It is no good blinking facts. Australia would be absolutely helpless to eject the new-comers. The only thing that could be done would be to draw an artificial line through sections of the continent, and declare that they would fight to the last drop of their blood to prevent these parts being taken. They would do that assuredly. But the white Australia would have gone, part of the continent would have passed into the hands of Asiatics. The Asiatics would develop it, which the Australians had not been doing. Their action would be to the economic advantage of the world. The nations of Europe would not be likely to come to the assistance of Australia.

Now, I am a whole-hearted advocate of a white Australia. I am fully at one with the noble ambition to keep it a white man's land. Talk, however, is not sufficient. Action must be taken. How?

It is my opinion that the Australians do not always appreciate the enormous extent of the country which they possess. Speaking generally, the Australian lives in the most temperate part of the continent, and is disposed to forget that an enormous part of the country lies within tropical regions. I am not one of those who say that the Briton cannot live or work in the tropics. He is doing so in many parts, but the tropics are not

suitable to the rearing of British people. The virile Briton, with the stored-up energy of his ancestors, can do and is doing wonders. The virility, however, does not last. The tropics are bad places for the breeding of white children; the conditions of nature are altogether against them; they grow up lanky, weedy, and without stamina. On the high, bracing dry uplands of Queensland healthy families can be reared; but in the low-lying, tropical, damp, soggy enervating atmosphere of the lowlands there is an undoubted falling away in the energy of the people who are being born out there and who are bringing fresh families into the world. The politicians and the mass of the electors live in the south. What I think they will have to realise is that conditions of life, suitable enough for their part of Australia, are not suitable for those portions which lie within the area of the tropics.

So, looking at the question from a practical point of view, it has to be decided, if Australia is to be white, what shall be done in the immediate future. The Commonwealth authorities are saying to the people of Great Britain: "If you want to emigrate, come to us, and we will give you welcome." That is excellent. Even, however, if Australia drew every emigrant in her direction, it would be long before the people, most of them drawn from the agricultural classes, would go and live in the torrid zone if they could find employment where the heat was not so severe. Australia must look elsewhere.

Every year thousands of emigrants leave Italy for the American continent. They work in the tropical

parts of America, and, whatever may be said to the contrary in particular instances, they are an excellent type of immigrant, industrious and sober. They stand heat much better than do those of British race, and their labour can be secured at a cheaper price than that of Englishmen or native-born Australians. "Ah, but," the Australian working man will say in answer to this observation, "the introduction of cheap Italian labour would mean the lowering of wages throughout the whole of the Commonwealth." The man who argues like that speaks without knowledge of what is being done elsewhere in the world. The taking of Italians into the north, to develop it under the supervision of Australians, would mean an increase in the value of the production of the continent. It would mean an increased demand for the manufactures of the south, and, as the north progressed, the south would reap an advantage. Again and again in Australia I ran across the fallacious argument that the coming of new people lowers wages. The coming of new people—if they go on the land instead of going into the industrial centres, which is a very different thing—would provide an increasing market for the workshops of New South Wales and Victoria. High wages mean that the manufactures of Australia cannot compete with the manufactures of other lands where wages are lower. The only development can be in Australia itself, and the development can only come with an increase of population. I believe that in time, with Italian settlers no doubt intermarrying with those of British race, there might

grow up a people acclimatised to the conditions of the north.

Meanwhile, however, much more is to be done. The people of Australia have to justify their possession of the north. The best justification is by developing it. Even though there were a continuous stream of ships bringing Italian immigrants to Australia, the continent is so vast that, for a generation at least, comparatively little would be done. Much happens in a generation. Before Japan could say, in circumstances which I have indicated, "We have a right to this land because you are making no use of it," a great deal should be endeavoured in the direction of making those enormous and fruitful tracts of the world's surface productive.

After careful and most serious consideration of all the great issues involved, I believe that the only way out will be by the utilisation—for a time, at any rate, until the white population has grown up—of coloured labour. I cannot too strenuously press that it is an economic question as well as one of sentiment. The Australians are unable to let industrious Japanese in, because Japan, as one of the world Powers, would do its utmost to see that once in they held their grip. The remedy lies in the utilisation of Indian native labour.

The Australian, like the rest of us, must not lose sight of the fact that the Indian is a British subject. As the Australian himself has claimed the right to go throughout the Empire where he thinks well, he cannot logically say to other people in the Empire: "We shall not let you into our country."

The situation is not of the calmest in India, and in the hour of stress the native Indians, recalling that the door is shut against them in Australia, might contribute to that disaster which many men fear, namely, a native uprising. A strain being thus put upon British arms, other Powers might seize the opportunity of Britain's troubles to extend their own bounds, and thus place Australia within the range of possibility of having to deal either with the desire of Germany to extend her colonies, or of Japan to widen her area. A zone line could be drawn through certain sections of the continent, below which coloured labour would be excluded. Within the prescribed northern districts, Indian labour could be employed under contract to do purely agricultural work suitable to the tropics, but which no white man of British race can do if he is to be paid a wage which will allow the results of his labour to be sold on level terms with the productions of other parts of the world where wages are cheap. All the time the drafts of Indian coolies were doing the purely laborious work, Italians and other south Europeans could be engaged in better work, whilst over all would be the managers of British race. As the white people became acclimatised and their numbers increased, the time would arrive when fewer Indian coolies need be brought in. Anyway, by this means an answer would be given to the question which is being put in many parts: "What right has Australia to hold land which the Australians are taking no effective steps to develop?"

I am well aware of the prejudice against coloured

labour, and I appreciate the reasons. The fear, however, in good Christian minds that it would lead to viciousness and degradation can be dismissed. There have been those troubles in other parts of the world, but they arose in times when conditions of life were very different from what they are at the present time, and they are not likely to grow up in Australia. I am seriously convinced—quite apart from other points which I have developed in previous chapters—that the Australians will some day be called upon to give good reason why they lay claim to the greatest island in the world. The best answer they can give, whilst never losing sight of the goal towards which they are striving—an Australia full of white people—is to utilise the instruments which lie to their hand, and which will carry all classes of the community to even a greater prosperity than they at present enjoy.

# CHAPTER XX

## THE GARDEN STATE

"As the sky is fair for all, whoever, wherever he be;
As the blessed stars on all shed their light of hope and of liberty:
So let the earth, this fertile earth, this well-loved Southern land
Be fair to all, be free to all, from strand to shining strand."

FRANCIS ADAMS.

VICTORIA, rightly called the Garden State of Australia, is small compared with other States. But it is as big as the whole of Great Britain.

It prides itself on not being as other States. It claims that it has a more educated population, that more has been done in equipping it, that the soil is superior to any elsewhere, and that generally it is leading the way. Certainly it is a charming country. During my motor trips through it I saw richer agricultural land than I had looked upon elsewhere. The country had a settled air about it, and all the farmsteads were prosperous.

Only I wish that the entrance to the garden were a little more up-to-date than it is. The towns are as fine as you can want; but the landing facilities at Port Melbourne are just about half a century behind the times. There is an indifferent pier, without shelter; railway engines are constantly snorting along it; the new arrival has some inconvenience in finding his way to the railway station,

which is about a quarter of a mile distant. No doubt in time the Victorian Government will provide landing accommodation really worthy of their State.

Now, you pick up a pamphlet and read that the population of Victoria has increased. When, however, you give more than a casual glance at the figures, you find that the increase has been, in the main, in the city of Melbourne itself. There have been years when Melbourne has increased by thousands whilst other towns and the rural districts have decreased. In 1908 the population of Melbourne increased by over 11,000, so that the population of the city is now about 550,000; other towns increased by just over 2,000, so that the population is now 211,000; the rural districts increased by 5,000, so that the population is now 510,000. Taking a period of seven years, Melbourne has increased its population by 47,521, whilst that of the rest of Victoria has increased by only 16,361. Thus three-fourths of the new population of Victoria has crowded into the capital city.

Here is an interesting spectacle, of a country as big as Great Britain with a population of one and a half millions, and the tendency all in the direction of one town growing until the time is within sight when half the people of Victoria will be living in Melbourne.

It is good that Melbourne should be a large and a beautiful place. Victoria's prosperity depends, however, not upon Melbourne, but Melbourne depends upon the rest of Victoria. That is a simple fact which, at times, is likely to be overlooked.

There are immigrants arriving in the State; they go upon the land. The Australian is disposed to shift from the land to the city.

The Victorian, when questioned about this, will regretfully admit the truth. If he lives on the land himself, his explanation will probably be the attractions of city life; but if he lives in the city he will tell you it is because so much of the best land is in the hands of individuals and used for the rearing of sheep, and that the man willing to turn farmer finds most of the suitable land locked up, or the price so high that little margin is left for profit.

Because of its excellent agricultural possibilities, the cry for splitting up the big pastoral estates is louder in this State than elsewhere. Of the 56,000,000 acres in Victoria, 34,000,000 acres are occupied; but of these only a little over 4,000,000 acres are under cultivation. The difficulty to extend this area is the reason put forward why so many Victorians are moving themselves off to other States.

Now comes the pertinent question, Why should Victoria be inviting agriculturists from Great Britain to come and settle in her realm when politicians in Victoria are declaring, in hammer and tongs manner, that they must secure land for their own people before land can be offered to immigrants?

In a little publication issued by the Victorian Land Settlement Division of the Immigration League of Australia, of which Mr. Alfred Deakin is president, it is stated: "No immigration is possible to "Victoria until the State Government has arranged "for land for its own people. . . . We want every-

"body in Victoria to be able to write to the old "country and tell their friends that it is easier to "get land here than in Canada and upon better "terms than can be had anywhere in the world. "No one can honestly write so now from Victoria. "We do not want our farmers' sons to be leaving "Victoria. We believe emigration from a rich "young country like Victoria is a symptom that "there is something wrong, and we think the want "of land is the root of the matter."

In a general description, Victoria is capable of doing as much agriculturally as Great Britain is now doing. Great Britain has become a manufacturing country and has ceased to owe its main prosperity to agriculture. The prosperity of Victoria must depend upon agriculture. Yet in sheep we grow more than twice as many as Victoria, nearly five times as many horses, four times as many cattle, and getting on for ten times as many pigs. We grow more than twice as much wheat, eight times as much oats, fifty times as much barley, and about twenty-five times as many tons of potatoes. I mention these figures as an indication of what Victoria can do with her good soil and her beautiful climate when once she gets into full working order. Anybody who has visited the western district of the State, or has been in Gippsland, or has been through the *mallee* country, or has seen the great national irrigation works, must appreciate what lies in front of Victoria when she is properly developed.

Let me make another comparison. Denmark

has about twice the population of Victoria; but in acreage she has only a seventh of Victoria's area. There are 165 persons to the square mile in Denmark, but only 14 in Victoria. Denmark has close upon a million people engaged in agriculture, whilst Victoria, says the Immigration League of Australia, has only one-eighth of that number. Denmark has nothing like the climate which Victoria possesses. Denmark, however, goes ahead; Victoria lags.

We survey amazing figures about Victoria's exportation of frozen mutton and frozen beef, rabbits and hares, bacon and ham, and all the rest of it. But when you lump all these together they do not nearly approach the value of Denmark's exportation of eggs alone. In Melbourne there is talk about the wool industry and the millions of money it reaps. That is true. But Denmark exports a greater value in bacon than does Victoria in wool. Lump the exportation of Victorian wool, wheat, butter and cheese all together, and then the State only exports two-thirds of the value of Denmark's exportation of butter. Indeed, Denmark's export of butter is greater than all Victoria's exports of wool, wheat, butter, cheese, flour, skins and hide, hay and chaff, fodder, oats, and dried fruits and fresh fruits. It is not by looking at figures standing alone that you get a proper idea of a country's prosperity; it is by placing those figures in comparison with smaller countries where the conditions are by no means so favourable.

"That will be all right," says the Victorian, "when the big estates are split up."

Despite Victoria's position to-day, I confess that I am full of optimism in regard to Australia's future. When the State has done what the people think best in opening up the country for farming, then will be the time to shout to the agriculturists at home: "Come and settle amongst us." As farming expands there will be scope for the man with capital. The man with capital, however, will be able to accomplish little without labour. Therefore, when the new condition of affairs provides a wider field for agricultural development, agricultural labourers are the men which will be most needed.

Victoria is a land of sunshine. The rainfall is fairly good. The conditions of life are pleasant. The death-rate is low. When the Government have put into working practice their schemes for throwing open the Crown lands, there will be millions of acres to offer to immigrants—not the best land in the State, but still land where not only a livelihood can be made, but a decent competence secured. At present the Government are spending huge sums of money in road-making, clearing the ground of bush, draining it and providing water. At the present time, Victoria, only one thirty-fourth of the total area of the continent, produces more than a quarter of the wealth of the whole Commonwealth. The Government own some 12,000,000 acres of Crown land, and the parts that I have seen are well suited not only for mixed farming, but for fruit culture. Besides, action is being taken toward closer settlement, so that those millions of acres, now in comparatively few hands and used for pastoral pur-

poses, may be given over to wheat growing and to dairying. Over half a million of money a year is authorised for re-purchase of estates and assisting settlers. Land settlement ought, therefore, to proceed with giant strides.

What, in the old days, hampered the new arrivals was the necessity of spending much money and much time before the land began to yield anything. The Government are adopting a policy of preparing the land for the settler, so that when he secures possession he can proceed at once to make money. The agricultural labourer can obtain an allotment on easy terms, so that if he is hard-working and willing to go into the less-favoured regions, not many years need elapse before he is the possessor of a freehold farm.

I shall always nurse in remembrance a motor tour I took in the district lying some twenty or thirty miles beyond Melbourne. Here were excellent fruit farms, flourishing market gardens, and an expanding milk business.

Of recent years there has been a striking movement in the western district to cut up some of the large estates and lease them as dairy farms. These are worked on the share system. The landlord provides the land, puts up a house, erects the outbuildings and finds the herd. The tenant farmer has to provide all the labour, and then the profits are shared between the landowner and tenant. To the Briton with good knowledge of dairying, but with no capital, this is an admirable means by which he can make a start in the new land. To

ride through a part of the Wimmera Plain, once a cattle run, was like traversing a fruitful stretch of Manitoba, in Canada—miles upon miles of waving wheat. There, also, one found a judicious combination of wheat growing and sheep rearing.

As I have indicated in earlier pages, the *mallee* district presents the most wonderful story of all of what determination can accomplish. The *mallee* is a thick-set, dwarfed eucalyptus, and it had put a grip upon some eleven million acres in the north-west part of the State. The soil was light, the rainfall deficient. Yet by steady clearance, by refusing to be broken in spirit, man has cleared some three million acres of the *mallee*, and turned it into a fine wheat-producing area. The progress which has been made in the last half-dozen years is astonishing. Some 3,000 farmers are now in the area. Millions more acres are being cleared. Railway lines are being laid down. Irrigation is being provided; so excellent is the return that the gross earnings average anything from £20 to £30 an acre.

Away in the eastern section of the State is Gippsland, probably the most prosperous stretch of agricultural land in the whole Commonwealth. It was formerly covered with dense forest, with trees rising full 150 feet and with undergrowth so matted that a way had to be cut with an axe. The whole region has been transformed. It is well settled, towns are many, cattle are on every hillside, a wonderful, expanding butter trade with England is growing up.

Victoria has now an extensive wheat belt, and this, fed by the rivers or by irrigation, and nurtured by superphosphates, ought to become one of the great grain-producing tracts. In those districts I visited I noted that the farmers were using the most up-to-date machinery, and that intelligent interest was being displayed in seeking for varieties of wheat most suitable to the soil. As the share principle has been adopted in the dairying business, so there is now a growing practice to raise wheat in the same way. The landowner provides the land and implements, and the farmer provides the work. Of course, there is nothing like the same amount of land devoted to wheat growing as can be found, say, in the smaller Canadian province of Manitoba. But that the day is coming when Victoria will take a very prominent place as a wheat-growing State I am convinced.

At present dairying is the happiest business in the whole of Victoria. Amongst those fond of a farming life, the attractions of dairying fall only short of the fascination there is in gold-mining. During the last twenty years dairying has made enormous advance. At first the business was haphazard. Then the Government came along and provided means for making it more scientific. Butter factories were established, and creamery and skimming stations set up. To stimulate the butter business, the Government gave instructions to dairymen as to the establishment of factories on the co-operative system. By way of further encouragement, a bonus of 3d. a pound was given on all butter

which fetched 1s. per lb. on the London market, 2d. on butter which got 11d. per lb., and 1d. on butter bringing in 10d. per lb. This had such an effect that within six years nearly two hundred co-operative butter factories were established.

So rapid has been the growth of dairying that country villages have now become thriving towns. Squatters, realising there was more money in butter than in sheep, readily parted with parcels of land suitable for dairy farming, and worked on the share system. In other pursuits a considerable interval elapses between the investment of capital and its return. In dairying it is immediate, and certainly, as far as the co-operative factories are concerned, each farmer gets paid once a month for the milk he has supplied. Dairying has, through natural causes, led to a considerable splitting-up of estates, because land-owners have been quick to appreciate the amount of money they can make. The Government give a strict eye to the quality, and by law the words, "Victoria, Australia," must appear on every package as a sort of advertisement of the State. It is excellent butter, and the demand is growing.

It is significant of the trend of development in Victoria that wool, which was formerly the staple production, has now been surpassed by the output from dairying and grain growing. This does not mean that the rearing of sheep is falling away in the State, but simply that it is being found more beneficial to the community to utilise the land in farming than in feeding sheep. Until a few years ago the mutton and beef market was restricted to home

consumption. Now, however, with an expanding export trade in frozen and preserved meat, a new source of wealth is being opened up. Victoria is the pioneer State in the exportation of frozen lamb. The Victorians, recognising that, as Great Britain becomes more and more a manufacturing country, it is, therefore, increasingly dependent on over-sea regions for its food supply, are laying themselves out to secure a considerable portion of the market. When it is remembered that we in Great Britain pay for the meat and pork we eat something approaching £40,000,000 a year, the possibilities which lie before Australia must be patent. Although Victoria sends to the United Kingdom about a third of the mutton and lamb which the United Kingdom receives from the Australian States, yet all Australia only supplies about a third of the value which New Zealand supplies. Argentina sends to us more than twice as much mutton and lamb as does all the Commonwealth. The Australians, however, are beginning to appreciate that their greatest competitor is not New Zealand but the Argentina, which is just at the gateway of its resources.

Where, also, Victoria has a promising future is in horse-breeding. Victoria is specially suitable for horses, and a great market lies in our Indian Empire. Indeed, I will venture to say that Australia, with its special qualifications, should become a great horse-breeding part of the British dominions. Besides this, there is a demand throughout the whole of lower Asia for the animals which Australia

can produce. I made it my business to attend several agricultural shows. Nowhere have I seen such healthy young stock or such hardy full-grown horses as I saw on those occasions. Not only are high-class race-horses produced, but the active, big-boned draught horses are not to be surpassed by the animals of any other country.

Fruit-growing of infinite variety is developing in this State. Orchards are to be found in many areas. Something like 50,000 acres are now set apart for fruit. The fruit season of Australia begins when that of Europe is drawing to a close. The European market, ready to avail itself of the produce of Victoria, is far larger than is at present comprehended by the Australians. We are great fruit eaters in England. In my vagabondings I have travelled through the Mediterranean on a tramp ship packed from hold to deck with fruit. Millions of cases from Australia arrive at our great ports, and yet, admirable though the increase of Victoria's fruit trade has been, only one out of every thousand cases of fruit landed from overseas in England comes from Victoria. Still, remembering the well-worn truism that Rome was not built in a day, one learns with satisfaction that, small though may be the importation of Victorian fruit into Great Britain, it has increased to a considerable extent during the last ten years.

Fortunes are to be made in Victoria not only in supplying Europe with fresh fruits, but also in the canned fruit industry. The sun-dried fruits of Mildura, particularly figs, are not bettered by the

fruits of Europe or America. Further, the time is coming, and quickly, when Victoria, together with other parts of southern Australia, will compete with the south of Europe in vine nurture. As I have mentioned in my chapter on South Australia, there is plenty of room for improvement in scientific growing. The fault is that the vineries are generally placed on ground which is too rich, and so a wine is produced which is more vigorous in flavour than is quite pleasant to the European palate. In my opinion there are many square miles of Victorian land too poor for growing wheat but admirably suited to viticulture.

Though other States have particular and peculiar qualities which, in certain lines, lead them to outdistance Victoria, there is no State in the Commonwealth which is so compactly good as Victoria, and where the conditions are so suitable for multifarious interests to go ahead. There is pig-breeding and there is poultry-raising. England is importing bacon from China, and those of us who have travelled in China and know how most of the pigs gain their livelihood by scavenging, recognise the risks to health by the importation of pork so fed. Here Victoria has a splendid opportunity. The United Kingdom annually imports £10,000,000 worth of poultry and game and over £6,000,000 worth of eggs. Here again is another fine opening—especially as, as in the case of fruits, Australian eggs are produced in vast quantities in the third quarter of the year, when the supply of European eggs is beginning to shorten.

The curse of drought, about which the outer world hears so much, has been given the go-by in Victoria. Many years have passed since Victoria was afflicted with drought. In the meantime, irrigation works have been constructed, so that more than a quarter of a million acres are now artificially watered. The northern part of the State is where insufficiency of rain is sometimes felt, and it is here that irrigation is most needed. Whatever Mr. Alfred Deakin has done for the good of his country, and whatever memorial the Australians in future years may raise to his memory, the finest monument of all will be the canals which were inaugurated under his authority when he was Minister of Water Supply of Victoria, and which now irrigate such an expanse of country. I know there have been harsh criticisms concerning the millions of money expended in providing irrigation in those parts of the State where it was least needed, namely, toward the south. The explanation is the old one—political. Those places where the electors were most numerous demanded irrigation for themselves, instead of the money being spent in localities which had limited population because of the scarcity of water. Now a much more comprehensive scheme is in vogue, and areas which were formerly barren and unattractive are flourishing bountifully—due mainly to the skill of a Canadian, Mr. Elwood Mead.

Victoria has played a large part in the gold production of the world, as the histories of Ballarat and Bendigo will tell. To-day a considerable quantity of gold is being mined within the State.

Victoria, however, has other metals—silver, copper and tin. Besides, there are the coalfields, which are of considerable area.

Victoria must go ahead. It is going ahead. The total value of production by her million and a half of population is close upon £40,000,000 a year. Yet always, in viewing the strides which have been made, one comes back to the point from which one started, namely, that with all its attractions, all its possibilities, the land is not being developed at the pace which its merits deserve.

# CHAPTER XXI

## QUEENSLAND

"Oh! my heart goes with the river. I scent the old gum leaves,
And hear the parrots screaming, high above me in the trees;
The Queensland sun is sinking, and the peaceful night draws nigh,
With glorious moonlight spreading o'er bush and sea and sky."

WILLIAM MAIN.

As a State Queensland is just half a century old. It is four and a half times as big as the British Isles, and the entire population is that of a London suburb. Yet the development of the country has been magnificent.

It has some three thousand miles of railway lines. Some twenty million sheep are browsing on its lands. There are over four million cattle. The value of Queensland's exports is something like £12,000,000.

Queensland to-day is playing to Australia very much the part that the great prairies of America played to the eastern seaboard of the United States half a century ago. Then the command was "Go west, young man." To-day in Australia, whilst in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia there is to be heard the order "Go west," more often the invitation is to go to Queensland.

The readiness which the various States display in directing attention to the motes in the eyes of

their neighbours finds rather an exception in the case of Queensland. Everywhere and always I found generous recognition of the fact that Queensland is the coming country. Its varieties of temperature, agricultural conditions, and range in productiveness is astounding. It is blisteringly tropical in the north; in the south there is the warm, luscious climate of southern Europe. For three months of the year the atmosphere is sweltering; but, for the other nine, immense areas have a climate which is quite congenial to people of European race. The death rate in the State is 9.56, whilst in London it is 21.3. There is plenty of rain in the tropical regions, and, though in the south there are times when water is scarce, the official figures represent an annual rainfall of 60 inches on the coast, whilst inland it is 27½ inches.

Queensland has already shown what it can do in the way of rearing cattle and sheep. Gradually its possibilities as a country for mixed agriculture are becoming known to the world. Its suitability for growing the sugar cane is beyond all question. It has forests, and one of these days its capabilities for growing cotton will, I trust, be appreciated by the rest of the Empire. It has great possibilities in rubber, coffee, tea, and cocoa. It is blessed with excellent coal mines. Its coast-line of 2,500 miles is indented with many fine harbours. It is something of a lucky bag in precious metals and rare stones: gold, silver, copper, tin, diamonds, amethysts, sapphires, opals; all these have been discovered, and millions more equally valuable are

probably awaiting the hardy prospector in those broken ranges of hills which have yet to be fully surveyed.

Queensland is parading its attractions to the rest of the world in a more suitable and sensible manner than is being done by any of the other States. I must have read hundreds of booklets, officially issued, proclaiming the merits of the different States in the Commonwealth. Mostly they struck a too pronounced note, picturing the land in too glowing colours, and, by this very excess of glorification, creating in the mind of the reader something of suspicion. It is not that the States do not possess most of the virtues needed in new lands calling for population. But, everything being painted rose, the reader is forced, reluctantly enough, to think the colouring has been laid on a little too lavishly. If a man goes out to Australia with his knowledge of the country limited to that which he has obtained from pamphlets issued by the various States, he will imagine he is proceeding to an earthly paradise. Australia, however, with all its excellences is hardly that. It has natural disadvantages with its advantages. It has turns of sorrow as well as turns of joy. In some respects it offers a better life than any other country can offer, whilst in other respects there are occasions for heart-searching. The point to be conceded is that, balancing one thing with another, it is a country where the man who is willing to face odds may, with energy and industry, arrive at a competence and an independence quicker than he can in any of the old countries he may have

left, and probably more quickly than in some of the other new lands which send forth invitations for immigrants. Now, the Queensland literature which I have read is restrained in tone, and, whilst not behind-hand in glowing enthusiasm about its possibilities, it recognises that the only way to achieve fortune is by continuous industry.

The capital, Brisbane, is a beautifully situated town. The Brisbane man believes there is no other town on the earth like it. That it will become one of the beautiful cities of the world I doubt not. At present it is rather hobbledehoy. It has some fine buildings, with plenty of others in its main thoroughfares that cannot be described as picturesque. Its streets are by no means as clean as those of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth; and as it is without a sewage system, it cannot arouse the enthusiasm of the man who admires energy in civic development.

Queensland, however, gives a lesson to the other States in the matter of ports. Elsewhere the tendency, due chiefly to political influences, has been to push all the export trade through one channel: Sydney in New South Wales, Melbourne in Victoria, Adelaide in South Australia, Fremantle in Western Australia—to the benefit of these towns, but frequently causing congestion, and to the disadvantage of other places which, if encouraged, would boom ahead.

No such charge can be brought against Queensland. The railway system has led to the development of other places besides Brisbane. Journey

north, and you find Maryborough exporting timber, Bundaberg and Mackay centres of the sugar industry, Gladstone a place for the exportation of meat, Rockhampton doing a big trade in wool, Townsville tapping a lovely pastoral district, and exquisitely situated Cairns, which is the delight of tourists in the Australian winter months.

Queensland has no rivers to speak of. She has, however, the rainfall to which I have referred. On the hills, within easy range, there is plenty of feeding stuff for cattle. On the hills behind Brisbane, particularly Darling Downs, there is a heave of country which can well be said to be one of the finest patches of grazing country. Further west come those seldom traversed regions which have hitherto been described as desert. In the days of not so long ago, when in these parts there was a shortage of rain, terrible were the consequences. The earth's surface was burnt ochre; not a blade of grass, not a drop of water were to be found; sheep died by the million. Yet it has been discovered that under this apparently barren country flow great subterranean rivers. They have been reached by means of artesian wells, and as soon as water has been struck, at varying depths —sometimes the crust is so thin that only sixteen feet of earth need be penetrated—there is a mighty gush of water from the bores.

Here, then, is one of the wonders: A land always within reach of drought and consequent disaster being turned to fruitfulness. Some of these bores belch forth as much as five million gallons of water a day, though the average outflow is something

like seven hundred thousand gallons a day. A log plough, dragged by sturdy teams, zigzags a channel for ten or fifteen miles over the plains. The water follows this tiny canal, makes small lakes where there are indentations in the land, and provides the one thing necessary to save sheep from death when droughts come along.

The trouble in former times was, when one district was stricken with drought, to drive the sheep and the cattle to places where water could be obtained. The wells were few; sometimes they were dried up, and the route from the arid part to the place where verdure and water could be secured was marked by a long row of carcases. That danger is lessening year by year, for, with the sinking of artesian wells and the flow of water through channels many miles long, the journey from the bad parts to the good is made easy. The development of the artesian well system, tapping these wonderful subterranean rivers, is doing, and will continue to accomplish, a great deal in bringing parts of Queensland which were regarded as useless within the area of prosperity.

The State is pursuing a wise policy in attracting immigrants. Free passages are given to suitable settlers. When they arrive they can, under conditions of occupancy, secure 160 acres of free land. Farming, however, is not conducted on the same lines as at home. Therefore fresh arrivals are well advised not to start "on their own" as soon as they have landed, but to enter the employment of somebody else, and gain a knowledge of local conditions

and Australian agriculture before they attempt to farm for themselves.

Special facilities are offered to settlers who induce their friends at home to follow them out to Queensland. The Government, besides the millions of acres which it holds, is gradually getting back into its possession by purchase some of the districts, particularly in the region of the Darling Downs, which hitherto have chiefly been used as sheep stations. So, improved farms can be obtained at a comparatively cheap cost. Agricultural homesteads, varying in size from 160 to 460 acres, can be purchased from the Government at 15s. an acre, to be paid for over a stretch of ten years. Further inland the courageous agriculturist may get a farming plot without paying a penny for it, on condition that he works it, and then for a very small sum he secures the freehold.

Of course, the man with capital is most welcome, and the Government has various schemes whereby land may be secured on easy terms. For instance, grazing land may be obtained on long lease at 1d. per acre a year, though in noting this peppercorn rent it should be borne in mind that in the interior the land is very poor, and sometimes takes four or five acres to maintain a sheep. Pastoral holdings on long lease can be secured at 5s. a square mile. Some of the stations held on this kind of lease are of an enormous size, running up to as many as a thousand square miles. I remember lunching one day with Mr. Syd Kidman, the cattle king, and in curiosity I asked him how much land he held in

the Australian continent. He made a rough calculation, and it came out at 60,000 square miles, an extent of territory in the hands of one man which it is difficult for folk at home to realise.

Everybody knows the enormous profits which sheep yield, firstly from wool and secondly from mutton. So when a squatter owns 100,000 sheep it is rather more profitable than the ordinary gold mine. Naturally enough, the man with means, who goes to Queensland wanting to get a fortune quickly, goes in for sheep. But the life is lonely, arduous, and anxious. With the constant possibility of drought, it is something of a gamble.

The endeavour of the Government is to encourage legitimate farmers to settle. As I have indicated, everything is being done to encourage such men. A new-comer can, on comparatively small capital, make a very good start. He purchases a farm from the Government, or he pays down £10 for every £100 of the value. In the second, third, and fourth years he pays no instalment whatever; from the fifth year he proceeds to pay instalments at the rate of £8 2s. 7d. for every £100 worth of value until the whole amount is cleared up. The fairly well-to-do settler with sons sends his boys either to one of the State farms or to the Agricultural College, where they may be thoroughly instructed in Queensland agriculture.

In Queensland, as in other States, the dislike of the native-born lad for rough farming life is most marked. New-comers go into the "back blocks," but their sons, and particularly their grandsons too,

often lose the love of the free life, and prefer to flock into the towns. There is a fascination in station life, the riding of horses, the rounding up of cattle. But for the laborious, though profitable, farm work, the young Australian does not care much. Many worthy Australians themselves have provided me evidence of this. Although I am not at liberty to give names of men who told me things in private conversation, I may quote a sentence or two which I found in the Year Book of Queensland for 1909. Referring to what the Government is doing to educate the youth in rural pursuits, it is stated: "Although the opportunities for a thorough agricultural education are thus largely availed of, it cannot be ignored that the majority of young Queenslanders do not take kindly to a farming life. The necessary plodding, the long hours of labour, and the uncertainty of the season lead them to the more congenial pursuits of station life. . . . The Australian youth appears to be born with a fondness of horses. Hence, as might be expected, there are few better horsemen in the world than the young bushman, and hence, also, arises the paucity of native-born agricultural labourers. It is not, therefore, surprising that immigrants of the farming class, both as settlers and farm hands, should be welcomed with open arms to our shores." Yes, the idea is a good one. But the thinking man casts his mind ahead a generation or so, and wonders what the sons of these immigrants and farm labourers will be inclined to do.

In the south of the State a great increase in the

dairying business is going on. Here New South Wales and Queensland abut. The climate is the same; the cattle can be out on the downs all the year round. No shelter is necessary, and there is no winter time when artificial foods have to be provided. A few years ago Queensland was importing butter; now Queensland is exporting millions and millions of pounds of it. With cold storage and quick transit there is a great market in Europe. Be it not forgotten that the seasons are reversed, so that when winter is coming in England and fresh butter is difficult to procure, spring has already arrived in Queensland, and thus fine fresh butter may be placed on the English market just when the demand for it is greatest.

There is plenty of good cheap land at anything from £2 to £10 an acre to be got in Queensland, which is lower than the price for similar land in New South Wales. A man with some dairying knowledge, landing in Queensland with a capital of £250, and obtaining possession of a Government farm, paying for it on the instalment plan, can make a most excellent livelihood. He has not to seek a market for his butter. The co-operative principle is at work. All he has to do is to supply the milk, either to one of the centres where there is a Farmer's Working Corporation or to a Government factory. There his milk is converted into butter in the morning, and the next morning when he brings milk along he can take away the skimmed milk for the nutriment of his calves, and the value of the butter produced is credited to him, with a deduction of a

certain percentage for converting it into butter and selling it to the dealers.

Now I come to a matter which, politically, has convulsed Queensland, and affected the whole of the population throughout Australia, namely, the growing of sugar. In the tropical regions the country is well adapted to the growing of the cane. Formerly Kanakas, natives of the South Sea Islands, were landed under indenture to cut the cane. But the cry of a "white Australia" sounded throughout the land, with the consequence that practically all the Kanakas were deported, and only white labour was permitted on the sugar plantations.

I have heard it disputed that the white man, working in the tropics, can cut as well as a coloured man. Let that point go. What is quite clear is that the white man must receive a bigger wage than the coloured man receives. This means increase in the price of production. It means, also, that unless the output is so enormous that quantity can force down price, sugar produced under white labour cannot compete in the markets of the world with the sugar produced, as it is in all other countries, by black labour. The consequence has been, although it is possible for the white man to work in tropical regions, and although many small growers have come into existence, that the sugar industry, if not crippled, at any rate has had its development considerably hindered. In order to keep the Australian-grown sugar from being under-sold by sugar from abroad, a duty of £6 a ton is imposed upon imported sugar. This is a burden on the tax-payer,

who also finds himself paying more for his sugar than formerly he did.

I believe that there could be no better investment in the world than in sugar growing in Australia. British investors, however, are chary; rightly or wrongly, they dread Labour legislation in Australia. Moreover, they are placed in a further difficulty, for, whilst Governments are saying to the investors of England, "Put your money into this country," the Labour men of Australia never cease girding at the British investor, who has already invested, for taking so much money out of the country by way of interest. Some of them go so far as to say that Great Britain ought to be extremely indebted to Australia, not only for borrowing money from the British financier, but for the money which is drawn out of the country by way of dividend after investment. The two parties are of advantage to each other. But it is difficult to understand the dual attitude which I encountered very frequently, namely, Why does not the British investor put more money into Australia? and secondly, What right has the British investor to take so much unearned increment out of Australia?

The Government is in a difficult position. Recent legislation has checked development; but it has quadrupled the number of small growers. The crops are plentiful and the Government, under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, has done excellent work, when groups of small farmers have combined, in advancing money to erect crushing mills in central districts.

The old plan was for Kanakas to be brought in

to the sugar area under indenture for a period of three years, receiving a minimum pay of £6 per head per annum. But with the cost of living and clothing it worked out at about £37 per head, with the addition of £8 to provide for the return of the Kanaka to his island. In the case of Kanakas who remained after three years, they made their own terms, which meant receiving anything from £20 to £30 a year. Then came the cry that the blacks were taking bread out of the mouths of the whites, and the result was that the use of the Pacific island labour was prohibited.

With only white labour employed, the sugar industry would have died had it been left to compete with the imported sugar from countries where black labour is employed. Accordingly, to nurse the industry, a duty of £6 per ton was, as I have said, put on foreign sugar. Prior to federation each State had its own fiscal system, so that it cost £6 per ton to get sugar from Queensland into Victoria and £3 to get it into New South Wales and South Australia. With federation came inter-state free trade, and the Commonwealth only taxed sugar which came from abroad. There is an excise duty of £4 per ton, thus leaving a balance of protection to the grower of £2. There is in addition a bonus of £3 per ton on sugar produced by white labour.

The problems to be faced are, first, whether the sugar industry is suitable for white labour; and, second, if it is, whether under her present legislation Australia can go ahead with the development

of the growing, so that she can send her sugar into the markets of the world, instead of being content to keep up a tariff, which simply amounts to nursing the sugar industry for home consumption by keeping out foreign sugar? Personally, I am all in favour of a government assisting by bounty a struggling industry. But unless the non-sugar growing population increases to an enormous extent, to consume the sugar which is grown within the Commonwealth, I do not see how the industry can expand, as the country is suitable for its expansion, unless some means are found whereby Australian-grown sugar can compete with sugar grown elsewhere. In another place I have shown how difficult it is to have uniform conditions of labour in a country where the climate ranges from tropical to temperate. Though white men are working hard and earning good wages on the sugar plantations, I am anything but sure that tropical agriculture, especially cane-cutting, is suitable to the white man.

I heard many stories of drunkenness and dissoluteness amongst white workers in the sugar regions. I decline to think that the many instances brought to my notice were due to the fact that the labour attracted an inferior type of workman. Rather, I am regretfully forced to the conviction that the work is so hard in the north, and the resultant lassitude is so great, that the poor fellows, suffering from a lowered vitality, are driven to secure artificial stimulant.

That the work can be done, I recognise. That it can be done by men retaining their energy year

after year, I am unable to agree. Above all, there is the fact that sugar provided by white labour, competing with sugar in the open market, cannot be produced at a profit. I am forced back to the conclusion I have stated in my chapter on a white Australia, that somewhere in the north a line must be drawn, and above that line the services of Asiatics should be utilised.

It is difficult to get some Australians to regard this question from an economic point of view, for they are obsessed with the desire to secure a white Australia. Those who differ from them are not always met with argument, but are faced with abuse. For a man, who knows the business, to state that the white worker is not as good as the black worker may be open to argument, but the way to meet such a statement is not by denouncing it as "scurrilous and blasphemous," as I know it has been. I have not the slightest sympathy at all with what is known in Australia as "the stinking fish party"—the men, of whom there are many, who are always finding fault with their own country. Neither, if I may be allowed to say so, have I the slightest sympathy with the Australian who makes the foundation of his belief the statement that all must be well in Australia, and that anybody who differs from him, who thinks things might be improved, is necessarily a contemptible creature deserving to be booed out of the land.

Australia has, therefore, a double trouble to settle: How to get white men to take up their habitation in those southern tracts well suited to

whites; and how to develop the northern part of her possessions, where undoubtedly the climate is such that it is unsuitable for white men to do the work of the labourer, either in cutting sugar-canes or in keeping the cane-fields clear from the weeds which grow in such profusion.

Queensland is rich in precious metals and stones. Already she has yielded something like £100,000,000 worth. Mount Morgan has yielded £12,000,000 worth of gold, whilst Charters Towers has yielded £20,000,000 worth. Queensland's possibilities in the direction of precious metals have only just been tapped; there are enormous districts that, up to the present, have received nothing but the most casual survey. Besides, the country seems to be mixed up geologically. It does not run sure. Gold may be found; but suddenly a streak of copper may be hit. The future of the State in mining may be anything. The district that is known to contain minerals covers an area of 32,000 miles. A miner can get a licence to prospect for the insignificant sum of 5s. Many of these men are out—brave, hopeful men—searching inhospitable regions for the thing which stirs the heart of men most—gold.

Some of the stories of how great finds have come along read like a romance. Everybody has heard of Mount Morgan. From an agricultural point of view the hillside is poor. A farmer named Gordon owned it, and with the utmost difficulty scraped a living by keeping a few head of cattle. Two brothers named Morgan, out prospecting, halted for a night at Gordon's hut. They had a look round. There

had been rain, and the water on the rocks revealed to the practised eyes of the brothers the possibilities of gold. They took away a few samples of rock. They came to a decision. They returned and bought out Gordon at £1 per acre for his selection—and he was very glad to get so good a price. The Morgans knew they had discovered something good, but had no idea how good. They needed money to set up machinery to crush the rock. They tried to realise £2,000 in Rockhampton by approaching one man and offering half their interests for £2,000. He declined, but with a relation and two friends they each raised £500. It was not many years before in return for that £500 they were both millionaires. The crushing of the rock now proceeds day and night under the glare of electricity. It is owned by a company with a capital of £1,000,000, and has produced £12,000,000 worth of gold, £7,000,000 of which has gone in dividends to shareholders.

Then take the case of Charters Towers, the leading goldfield of Queensland. Three prospectors, sitting one night over an evening meal, discussed where they should prospect next. One of them suggested that before they left the district they should have a look at some little hills in the distance. The next day they rode seventeen miles through the country, came to a ragged little hill 300 feet high, and there found quartz which indicated they had discovered a good find. In time fresh comers came, looking for alluvial gold, for gold-reefs yield the most profitable return. The richest fell into possession of a man named Francis Horace Studbley, and in a very

short time he made several hundred thousand pounds. He was a good-natured man. His fortune he disbursed in extravagance. When it was all gone, he returned, a pauper, to see if he could not make another lucky find. He was found lying dead by the roadside.

# CHAPTER XXII

## AUSTRALIA AND CANADA

"The lithe Australian with the earnest eye
That looks not back, but courts the future high,
And eager soul for ever in a glow.
Heavy the task, but boldly these shall meet
The burden and the heat,
For toil to brave men still for noble ends is sweet."

EDWARD B. LOUGHRAN.

MORE than once I have indicated that the Australian cares comparatively little about what is happening in the old countries of the world. He has, however, a lively interest in the development of the newer lands, such as the United States and Canada. With an admiring eye, he looks upon the enormous development of the United States. Feeling that he has the vim and the energy which are characteristic of the people in the great republic, he pictures the bright day when Australia will be as aboundingly prosperous as America. That, he recognises, must be in the distant future, and when he will have ceased to have any personal interest in the growth of his country. So at present he is prone to measure himself with the Canadian. He sees how the Dominion is increasing in wealth, how the prairies are being gridironed with railways, how the population is increasing by millions. He wonders why it

is that people of the older lands, seeking other regions where their efforts will be better rewarded than in the crowded, competitive countries of Europe, drift so strongly toward Canada and so slackly toward Australia.

Now, I have been impelled to write this chapter, because the rival attractions of Canada and Australia were a very frequent topic of conversation when I talked with men about the slow growth of the Australian population. I would not like to say that Australia is jealous of Canada's progress. But there is undoubtedly a clinging wonder why people should go to Canada, which is swathed in snow for five months in the year, where the climate is severe and forbidding, instead of going to Australia, where snow is hardly known and where it is possible to live out of doors practically the year round.

It was interesting to notice how, in referring to Great Britain, the Australian was disposed to harp upon our supposed decadence; and, in commenting upon Canada, how he invariably came back to this: "How terrible it must be to live in a country which is so cold for half the year, compared with Australia, where the climate is invariably genial."

I have shown that Canada primarily attracts the farming folk of the older lands. Why? Because it is nearer Europe than is Australia, and therefore easier to reach; because absolutely free land is given to the immigrant; because the man who goes forth generally proceeds to some place where relatives and friends are already doing well; because Canada is boomed and advertised, and the world kept well

acquainted with its prosperity, whilst Australia is at the other end of the world, and not so many people have relatives and friends out there; because stories reach Europe at intervals of drought and commercial disaster in Australia; because Australia's advantages are not properly heralded, and because the working men in Australia themselves frequently tell their fellows in the lands from whence they themselves came that there is unemployment and really no room for new-comers.

Knowing something of the Dominion and the Commonwealth, I can say, without any disparagement of Canada, that Australia has a happier and pleasanter life to offer than can be secured in Canada. But, as I have already pointed out in previous chapters, there are no laws in Canada such as there are in Australia to hinder the landing of a man who has little but his muscle and his determination to advance him. And, again, in the opening up of the country the governments act on different lines; namely that, whilst in Canada an encouragement is given to the building of railways, knowing that settlers will come, the practice in Australia is to hold back the building of railways until there are sufficient settlers to require them. The tendency of this policy in Canada is to spread the vast majority of the population over the rural areas; and the tendency in Australia is to confine them to limited areas and produce an altogether disproportionate population in the towns compared with those who are engaged upon the land.

In the course of my investigations I made the

acquaintance of a man in New South Wales, who had extensive farming experience in both Canada and Australia. He went out to Australia in 1886 from Canada, and he told me that what struck him very much was the apathy in the new land to which he had come in regard to immigration, compared with the enthusiasm and enterprise displayed by the authorities of the Dominion. He ascribed the booming of Canada to the national spirit of the people of the Dominion, which has soared above the petty "stinking fish" tactics of unpatriotic Australians.

Sad to acknowledge, but the fact should be recognised, that in Australia there is a section of people who are deservedly sneered at by the rest of the community as the "stinking fish party"—folk who are always sneering at their own country, always dilating upon the hardships of life in the "back blocks," always scoffing at those who praise their land, and who make no secret that they simply want to obtain enough money in order to clear out of the country.

I remember travelling with a lady and gentleman who had lived some thirty years in Australia. The man had acquired a considerable fortune; he had had his ups and his downs; but now that he had secured his pile, he was making for Europe, and never intended to return to what he called that "cursed land" again. I have never heard a Canadian talk like that.

This condition of mind is not limited to the rich Australian. It is to be found amongst the working

classes. Delegates of trade unions have even been sent from Australia to London to warn artisans against going out to Australia. I recall talking to a carpenter about the thousands of men who were leaving England for Canada, and asked him whether it would not be a fine thing if Australia could have a similar immigration. "Oh, yes," he replied, "I have got no objection to immigration, but we do not want any more carpenters!"

The fact of the matter is that a dread exists that the coming of new workers into the Commonwealth will lower wages. This feeling is not limited to Australia. I came across examples of it in Winnipeg. Yet the flow of immigrants to the West of Canada has not lowered wages in Winnipeg; it has increased them.

Australia is beginning to open its eyes and to understand. This is chiefly because the people of the Commonwealth have learned a lesson from the Dominion. I say, with whatever authority my pen can command, that if Australia does not become far more productive of wealth than Canada, it will be due to the short-sightedness of the Australians themselves.

In farming, Canada has to contend with a long winter, often hard to bear. The snows, however, provide the soil with nourishment. Just as there is the possibility of a continued drought injuring seriously the farming in Australia, so, in the northern wheat-growing areas of Canada, there is the continuous nightmare of a possible summer frost which will blight the produce of a million acres.

Australia by comparison has no winter. So life is enjoyable, and the farmer can take two, or even three crops of various kinds from the same ground in a year. My New South Wales farming friend told me that his selection in Canada was seven miles from the town of Brandon, which is 150 miles west of Winnipeg. In those days (1880 to 1886) it was found impossible to get even the hardy apple tree to survive through the winter. I believe, however, this has been overcome by the introduction into Manitoba of a Russian apple. "Now, mark the difference," he said to me, "I have in my own garden here in Australia, growing side by side, the following fruits: mandarin, orange, lemon, lime, pear, peach, plum, persimmon, quince, grapes, strawberries, passion fruit and rhubarb, not to mention half a dozen European vegetables growing all the year round. Potatoes grown in Manitoba during the summer, if they are to be kept for winter use, must be put in frost-proof cellars, which is unnecessary in Australia. If the Canadian farmer has an apiary, his hives must be removed into warm cellars for the winter. His poultry-house must be built with thick walls, and even then his fowls are often frozen to death. There is nothing of this sort in Australia. The poultry roost in the trees both summer and winter, and the apiary is left undisturbed, bees flying to and fro all the year round. That Australia has natural pastures for her flocks and herds, can supply fruit or fresh, grass-made butter and cheese during the English winter months, gives it a signal advantage. It places its dairy produce on the home

markets at a season when supplies from America and northern Europe are scant."

Magnificent wheat is grown in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Assiniboia, and Alberta. I have seen it. And for days I have driven through miles upon miles of rustling wheat. To be quite just, there are patches in Australia which can grow equally good wheat. I did not see, however, nor did I hear of any similar enormous expanses of prairie, which would at all compare in excellence with the Canadian soil. The Canadian selector of prairie land has considerable advantage in having no timber to fell and clear. So, within his first year he can begin to make money. The Australian has generally to clear the ground of timber, and it is rarely until the third year that a crop can be grown. On the other hand, as the Canadian selector settles on the prairie, his time is almost wholly occupied in winter in hauling small stunted trees from great distances. And the great scarcity of fuel is a big drawback in a country with long winters. The new settler in Canada finds himself at a distance from a railway—for be it remembered that the 160 acres of free land which the Government gives to the immigrant is seldom nearer a railway than thirty miles—and consequently the cost of getting produce to market is sometimes so heavy that a considerable amount of his profit is eaten up.

If Australia sets about the matter rightly, there is no reason why the strong-limbed agriculturist of Great Britain, or the northern regions of Europe, who wants to emigrate, should not be brought to

understand that it is not more difficult to reach land in Australia than it is to reach available land in Canada.

By the time the settler in Canada has arrived at his far-away free grant in Saskatchewan or other parts of the western territory, it has cost him as much or more than it would do to reach an Australian port, where, without much trouble, he can arrive at some part of the Government-owned coastal land. Canadian free grants are very far from the coast. Indeed, on reaching Canada, the immigrant generally has to travel 2,000 miles by train, and then journey another 40 or 50 miles by wagon, before he reaches his allotted quarter of a square mile. Nevertheless, I have come across many men in Canada who have been able to secure a competence within a comparatively few years. I have found Australian farmers doing the same thing.

The cost of carrying goods must be taken into consideration. Handling and freight of wheat from north-west Canada to Liverpool costs more per bushel than from the wheat centres in New South Wales to London. Take the butter industry in which my friend and his three sons, as dairy farmers, were interested. All they paid in freight from their farm to London was .23 of a penny per lb.

Here are the experiences of this farmer in both countries. "In 1879, with my wife and child, I left London for Canada and took up 200 acres of Crown land in Ontario, about 150 miles north of Toronto, in the district of Muskoka. The place was very picturesque, but I found that the land in the whole

district which was not rock was pure sand. I believe now, after thirty years, there is not much more farming carried on in Muskoka than when I took up land. It is a place attractive only to the tourist, hunter and trapper. I stayed there a little over twelve months, during which time I got out pine logs for the mill, as I found it impossible to grow anything successfully in the sand. At that time the influx to Manitoba had set in, and I decided to try my luck in that province. I started on a selection about seven miles from Brandon, and stayed there until 1886, when, seeing nothing but a bare living in view for the rest of my life, if I stayed on, I took the first opportunity of selling out and removing with my family to a country which would, at any rate, provide a more genial climate. My experience in Australia has abundantly proved the wisdom of the change, and my only regret is that I did not in the first instance emigrate to Australia instead of to Canada, and so have saved much valuable time and money at the start. Having expended my slender capital, I decided upon accepting the offer of a position in town until such time as I had sufficient capital again to make a fresh start on the land. It would also give a better opportunity of having my children fairly well educated. All my boys and girls (seven in all) seemed to have an instinct for country rather than for town life. And, as soon as they were old enough, they all received a training on farms or stations with friends, thus acquiring an early knowledge of rural pursuits which later became most useful. Two of my boys took

part in the South African War, at the conclusion of which they returned, and took up Government selections in this district at 20s. per acre, with the object of dairying. This part had commenced to come into prominence as a splendid dairying country owing to its proximity to the coast, and the consequent low cost of getting produce to Sydney; rich soil, most bountiful rainfall, and the introduction of that wonderful grass—*paspalum dilitatum*. My eldest daughter also selected, and for five years my three sons and two daughters worked the land—burning, grassing, and fencing—whilst I remained in Sydney supplying them with the cash until the farm was self-supporting. I then resigned my position in Sydney of £350 per annum to join my sons, and I have no reason to regret the move. I have also selected, so that we have now amongst us 1,453 acres. The three lads have done most of the work on the place, with very little outside assistance. I have expended some £1,500, and now, after seven years, our position is that we have land worth at its present valuation £10 an acre, including improvements, £14,530; 150 head of stock, £1,000; total, £15,530.

"On one farm we have 150 acres under grass and 60 acres fallen ready to burn and grass next month, and on the other 120 acres grassed. Altogether we are milking 90 cows, which return £8 per cow per annum. Not a bad return on an investment of £1,500! Could anything like this be done in Canada? I think not. It should be remembered that our farms are in their infancy, and as we get more ground cleared and grassed year by year, so

will our output increase and the value of our land enhance. Well-grassed farms in our neighbourhood are changing hands at from £20 to £40 an acre, whilst the rent demanded for the same is from 30s. to 40s. per acre per annum. This sounds high, but I assure you there are farms here which easily carry a cow to the acre, and on paspalum alone all through the year. One leased farm of 100 acres near us has been carrying 130 head of stock for years, and the returns from cream alone have been as much as £90 a month. Our land was most heavily timbered, excellent soil and well watered by creeks and springs. We have nearly two miles frontage to the Pacific Ocean, and the house is on a high ridge which gives us a commanding ocean view extending from Cape Byron to Point Danger. On our western boundary we have the railway, and two railway stations within two miles. The butcher, baker and storekeeper deliver at our house, which is very different from having to travel many miles for stores, as I had to in Canada. We can sit on our veranda both summer and winter and enjoy the weather and scenery, watching the ships pass on the east side and the trains on the west. If we want a trip to Sydney all we have to do is to jump on the train, almost at our door, for Byron Bay, fourteen miles off, catch the seven o'clock boat, and on Sunday evening we can be listening to the sermon at St. Andrew's, Sydney.

"There is as great a difference between farming here and farming in Canada as there possibly can be. Here is every advantage, there every disadvan-

tage. A man would be very foolish indeed if, knowing of these differences, he were to take only into consideration the free grant offered by the Canadian Government as an inducement to give that country the preference.

"You ask what I think of the prospects for a man with little money settling in Australia compared with the prospects of such a man in Canada? My opinion is all in favour of the Commonwealth for the intending settler, whether he have means or not. My advice, however, to one and all is this: Do not invest until you have been some months at least in the country working for others. Take hold of the first work that offers on a station or farm; there is plenty to learn. In this way a new-comer finds out if the occupation suits him without dropping any of his capital; he is also sure to hear of an opening in which he can commence on his own. There are some men who are, from various causes, bound to be failures. On the other hand, there are those who are sure to succeed. A young Welshman, 19, wrote me from Sydney at the beginning of this year (1909) asking if I could employ him. I told him I would give him a trial for a month for his board, and if he suited I would pay him after that whatever he was worth to us. The work he had to do was very rough, for although a dairy farm, the dairy work is looked after by the girls and myself, leaving the young men to fell, brush, burn off, fence, split rails, etc., in the preparation of new ground for grassing. He came, and we soon found that he was a great worker, although he had never soiled his hands

before. He had come to learn, and learn he would, be the work never so rough. He kept up with my sons after a time, and soon learnt to handle the tools dexterously. Always cheerful and willing to turn his hand to whatever had to be done. After the first month we found him so useful that we paid him full wages, although he said he did not expect pay as he was only a learner. This young fellow is well connected and is in receipt of a private income. Yet he could see that working was to benefit him later on, and was sensible enough to know that the work would not cause him to lose caste. After being with us nine months he has, together with another young man, leased a dairy farm. They are now milking 60 cows, which should return £500 per annum for cream alone. Their rent is £150 a year, and they hire one lad to help milk. I am quite sure that this could not be done anywhere in Canada within so short a time, if at all. This is no isolated case by any means. I know of many selectors who are prosperous men owning 2,000 to 3,000 sheep and from 640 to 10,000 acres. The rise from penury to a comfortable position in life is sometimes startlingly rapid."

# CHAPTER XXIII

## TASMANIA

"But always I would wish to be where the seasons gently fall,
On the Further Isle of the Outer Sea, the last little isle of all;
A fair green land of hill and plain, of rivers and water-springs,
Where the sun still follows after the rain, and ever the hours have wings,
With its bosomed valleys where men may find retreat from the rough world's way . . .
Where the sea-wind kisses the mountain-wind between the dark and the day."
ERNEST CURRIE.

HAPPY Tasmania!

Not only do the people joy in the satisfaction of living in the most beautiful part of the Commonwealth, but they have the brightest confidence concerning its industrial future. People in Britain look at a map of Australia, note the island of Tasmania at the lower end of the map, and without inquiry conclude that it is perhaps about as big as the Isle of Wight. As a matter of fact it is nearly as big as Scotland; it is over twice the size of Belgium. Yet whilst Belgium maintains a population of 7,000,000, the population of Tasmania is only 185,000—about that of a fourth-rate town in England.

It is a charming little State. It has a Governor sent out by the King, two Houses of Parliament, a Prime Minister, an Agent-General in London. It has the satisfaction of reading eight daily and five

weekly papers, including a journal specially devoted to the interests of the Labour Party. It has a university, State-owned railways, plenty of trade, and everything goes well.

You will find on inquiry that, although Tasmania cannot possibly compete with the mainland of Australia in the quantity of sheep, it does produce the best stud sheep, and that although the coal discovered up to the present is not of the highest quality, there are good hopes. But, anyway, there is plenty of iron and other minerals. There are most of the essentials for shipbuilding. Altogether there is the confident belief among the Tasmanians that one of these days their island will stand in relation to Australia very much as Great Britain does in relation to the Continent of Europe.

In judging what is done by a community, it is always necessary to have a standard. The thing, therefore, to be constantly kept in mind when considering what Tasmania is doing, is that the whole island cannot yet boast of a population of 200,000. Yet she has a trade approaching £8,000,000 per year.

Federation with the States of Australia was a good thing for her. Appreciating that her future must lie along the line of industrial development, she directed a good many of her energies to manufacture. Now, the rate of wages being high, and the distance from Europe being great, it was impossible to conceive that Tasmania would do much in sending her goods to Europe. Her market lay with the millions of people on the Australian continent.

Tasmanians did manage to do business with New South Wales, which previously had free trade; but they were considerably hampered by the tariffs imposed upon Tasmanian articles on endeavouring to enter Victoria. Now, whilst there are tariffs against the world, there is inter-State free trade in the Commonwealth, with the consequence that Tasmania is now as free to sell her manufactures in Victoria as she is to sell them in Tasmania itself.

The island is generally understood to be occupied with the growing of apples. Well, a tremendous and increasing business is done in apple growing, and England itself receives about half a million cases a year. The Tasmanian engaged in apple culture makes a profit of about £40 per acre, so that an up-to-date orchard brings in its owner something like £1,000 a year. But it must not be thought that fruit culture is the mainstay of Tasmania, although no doubt it is the most pleasant means of earning a livelihood. I have already mentioned sheep; as good wool is to hand, and as the mountains, lakes and streams are likely before long to be much utilised in the production of electric power, there is a movement to extend the woollen mill industry. Besides, there is an extremely rich belt of mineral country. I heard of two companies, one dealing with tin and the other with copper, which has disbursed over £5,000,000 in dividends. Further, there are enormous iron deposits.

It has rather impressed me that Tasmania has not become more a place of residence for comparatively well-to-do folk, and why those people who

are constantly looking round for parts of the world to be developed with advantage do not avail themselves of the attractions which the island offers. It is mountainous and it is beautiful. It has fine rivers and good fishing. The climate is like that of the south-west of England. Living is comparatively inexpensive. In the towns of Hobart and Launceston there is a pleasant and cultured society. A good many Anglo-Indians, having reached the pension age, have settled, and many of their fellows are likely to follow. To the man who does not care for London life and who is fond of the country, and the good things the country brings, £400 in Tasmania is calculated to go about as far as £1,000 in England.

At present Tasmania is an agricultural country. It is gradually becoming a mining country, and the time is approaching when it will be a considerable industrial country. I have mentioned the water power available; this will be of an immense advantage in securing cheapness of production—in balancing, as it were, the high cost of labour with the cheapness of driving power, and, therefore, being able to produce an article at a cheaper price than in any of the continent States, where also labour is expensive, but where water cannot be utilised to any extent in electric power stations.

Those who have given close study to the question believe there is a considerable future for the woollen trade in the island. At present there are only three or four mills at work, but the demand is so great that the machinery is kept going all the twenty-four hours

of the day, and orders have so accumulated that they cannot be satisfied for many months. Nowadays the mass of Tasmanian wool is exported to Europe. Though, of course, it is not the same wool which comes back in clothing, still the purchaser has naturally to pay more for European goods than he would have to pay for goods which could be supplied nearer home. Besides, there is a protective duty of some 25 per cent. on imported woollens. The Commonwealth annually imports £3,000,000 of manufactured woollens. The demand will increase as population grows, and Tasmania, with her natural advantages—particularly of water, which is most necessary in the manufacture of wool—is zealously anxious ultimately to secure the bulk of this trade. Were I a capitalist I think I would invest money in woollen mills in Tasmania.

As I have mentioned, there is much being done in mining minerals. I doubt if there is any other area so rich in minerals. At present they are only being tapped. There are regions yet to be explored, wild, rugged, hard country, and prospectors find their labour most arduous. The enthusiasm of men and the appliances of science overcome difficulties when valuable ores are unearthed, and fortunes are to be obtained quickly. Tin, copper, silver, lead, gold are all being developed. Not much is yet done with iron, but on the north-west coast, what will perhaps turn out to be the biggest iron mine in Australasia has been discovered. The ore is of first quality, containing 95.2 per cent. of iron peroxide. A hole has been pierced by a 260-feet drive, and fully

forty million cubic yards of ore are revealed. Money, however, is required further to work this ore.

The Government do not allow private individuals to become sole possessors of mineral-bearing land. The land is held by the Crown, and it allows it to be worked under lease, the price ranging from £1 per acre for gold-mining, 10s. per acre where gold is associated in small proportion with other metals, 2s. 6d. per acre for coal, slate, free stone and limestone, and 10s. per acre for other metal. The value of minerals produced is well over £2,000,000 a year, whilst between six and seven thousand persons are engaged in the industry. Therefore, although Tasmania is mainly known to the outer world as famous for its apples, the annual export trade of its fruit is not yet £500,000, whereas, as I have just indicated, the annual produce of mineral wealth is over £2,000,000.

There is no free land to be obtained in Tasmania. But there is land suitable to every pocket, provided there is something in that pocket. The price varies from 5s. to £1 per acre for uncleared ground, up to as high as £40 for an improved property. There is a sufficiency of rain, so that the dread of Australians, the drought, never worries the people of Tasmania.

British people with means are showing a strong disposition to embark upon orchard rearing. It is a life which appeals to those who lack the physique to engage in the heavier agricultural works. Some 20,000,000 acres are now given over to the growing

of fruit. In general farming, however, Tasmania should appeal to the Englishman, because conditions are very much as at home. As it is fairly easy for the man with energy to get ahead in Tasmania and be his own master, agricultural labour is naturally scarce. Therefore, it is hardly the place for what might be called the gentleman farmer, who superintends and who has a number of employees under him. Rather it is a country which should appeal to the sturdy yeoman and his sons, who are able and willing to do the farm work themselves, without being overmuch dependent upon labour from outside.

The little community—especially when one remembers it is hardly more than half a century since it really came into being—has accomplished much in its short lifetime. About £10,000,000 have been laid out in public works, including railways, harbours, bridges, and the like.

Tasmanians, finding life easy and agreeable, are like their neighbours on the continent of Australia, extremely fond of having a good time. Though there are many touches of British home life, there is a greater freedom, what might be called a larger democratic spirit than in the old land. Owing to the scarcity of labour, and the difficulty to get servants, the girls of a household generally have to do their full share of the work, and are none the worse for it.

I am indebted, in regard to much of the information I give in this chapter, to a couple of personal friends who visited the island and who supplied me

with information collected on my behalf, because, owing to personal reasons, I was obliged to return to England hurriedly before I had the opportunity of visiting Tasmania. They agreed with all I had gathered elsewhere about the charm of the life, the amiability of the people, and the ease with which a man of grit can make a very excellent living. The people who ought not to go out to Tasmania are clerks and shop assistants. There are plenty of those there, as there are in other countries, and the remuneration, compared with that given to a mechanic, is poor.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE GREAT LONE LAND

"In the bright spring morning we left them all—
Camp and cattle, and white and black—
And rode for the Range's westward fall,
Where the dingo's trail was the only track."

MARY HANNAH FOOTE.

THERE lies before me as I write a pink-covered publication, entitled "Territoria," advertising the advantages of the Northern Territory of South Australia. There is a map, and by the side of it are certain significant figures The Northern Territory is 560 miles wide and 900 miles long, and has an area of 523,620 square miles. It is four and a half times the size of Great Britain, two and a half times the size of France, one-fifth larger than New South Wales and Victoria together, and comprises nearly one-sixth of the continent of Australia. Then the startling figures of the white population: 1,110.

This great land has not as many people in it as an English village. It has 335,116,800 acres of land, and yet not a thousand acres are in tillage. There is no other region of the earth habitable by man so sparsely populated.

The Northern Territory is called the Cinderella of Australia. Is there any prospect of the beautiful prince coming along? That has yet to be seen.

Now, in reading this pleasantly written book, I occasionally halted, rubbed my eyes and wondered how it was that the Territory should have been missed by the millions of the world seeking for a fresh place to settle? "Of all the unsettled parts of the earth it is the land of promise, only requiring facilities for an industrious, energetic European immigration." Further, it is proclaimed to be magnificent in its resources, so that perhaps "no part of the uninhabited globe possesses a climate so suitable for the easy production of human life." As I turn the pages my amazement increases, for here I read of magnificent harbours, of plenitude of rain —the thing for which all Australians devoutly pray. The magnificence of the climate, subtropical but undoubtedly healthy, "and this we challenge any detractor to gainsay." "It has many great rivers; it abounds in minerals. There are millions of acres of rich agricultural lands only waiting the advent of a railway to make it the home of millions of white people; its vast stretches of uplands are clothed with Australia's best grasses, capable of supporting millions of cattle, horses and sheep; it is an open, unguarded door for the teeming millions of the east. It is within ten days' steam of the great Asiatic markets and a week nearer to the European markets than is Sydney or Melbourne."

To read this book one would conclude that the Northern Territory is the emigrant's El Dorado. Yet not only is the white population small, but it is decreasing. Why is this?

The history of the Northern Territory is not a

bright chapter. It lay practically ignored until South Australia, in a burst of ambition, annexed it. The future was rosy. The few men who had penetrated it, or who had gone up the rivers, told of the fine pasturage and how the country was fitted by nature for the growth of all tropical products such as cotton, sugar, rice and coffee. The South Australians, chockful of good intent, saddled themselves with debt and proceeded to lay the lines for gigantic development. Expeditions were dispatched to find a suitable site for a capital city. It was found, but had to be abandoned. Officials quarrelled with one another and had to be withdrawn. The Government had accepted money from intending settlers, but surveys were delayed, were inaccurate, and those who had handed money over to the Government clamoured for its return. An endeavour was made to appease them by offering them larger stretches of country. As there was no success there was much grumbling. South Australia awoke to find herself shackled with debt and an enormous annual expenditure for the administration of a land which yielded little return. South Australia, in vulgar parlance, had, in undertaking the government of the Northern Territory, "bitten off a bigger piece than it could chew."

In time gold was found. There came the inevitable rush. Disaster eventuated, and most of the companies formed were over-capitalised. Much of the machinery was useless; most of the mining managers were incompetent. Then came the construction of the over-land telegraph line from

Adelaide to Port Darwin. It was thought that the expenditure of £120,000 upon this line of wire, doing something to open up the country, would be of advantage. It was of very little advantage, and the cost was well over £400,000. Next came the project for the construction of a trans-continental railway. If only there were a railway, settlers would find easy means to reach rich lands. The scheme was to let private builders come in, and, in return for constructing a metal way through the heart of the continent, receive large grants of land. On this, however, the South Australians took fright. They dreaded great private companies having a land monopoly. They shied at the prospect of investors in other countries drawing huge dividends out of the good country. Changes of government were frequent; shilly-shallying was the rule; the mighty project has been hung up for many years. But in the north, from Palmerston, near Port Darwin, steps were taken to run a railroad south to as far as Pine Creek. It was hoped that European labour would be secured to construct the way. But British labour was dear, and it was chary. Then it was thought that sturdy European labourers could be obtained from Silesia at wages of about 2s. a day, and that after their services in building the line were concluded they could be got to settle on farms made over to them at something like a gift. This fell through. The upshot was the employment of Chinese labourers, who cleared out when their work was finished. So there was a railway running through land with no settlers. Settlers would not come, or,

if they came, they speedily departed. The railway has been a financial failure.

Still, investigators reported on the fine possibilities of the country. At the end of their reports, however, they generally added that, however suitable the Territory was to grow tropical products, the climate was too bad for Europeans. The South Australians recognised this, and there was general acquiescence in the belief that, whilst white men should have the management, the manual labour could only be done by coloured folk. The inclination was towards securing Indian coolies. The mass of Australia's population, however, being in the temperate part of the country, took up the "white Australia" cry, and let it be known that it was their intention to preserve the whole of Australia for white men, and that on no account would coloured labour be allowed. With the advent of the Commonwealth, a "white Australia" became the policy of the country. That white labour could be utilised in tropical regions was shown by the employment of white men in Queensland. Port Darwin, however, is much nearer the equator than is Mackay in Queensland, where white labour is growing sugar. Perhaps, though I doubt it, white-tended sugar in Queensland will be a success—though by import duties and bonuses the all-white policy is adding over £300,000 a year to Australia's sugar bill—but it will mean there will be little chance of the Northern Territory becoming a great sugar-producing country, because Queensland will be able to supply Australia's needs and the Terri-

tory will not be able to export because the price of white labour will raise the price so that it cannot compete with sugar produced in other parts of the world.

Valiant have been the efforts made during the last quarter of a century to turn this great lone land into productivity. The climate is wearing; it saps energy from European muscles. There are great swamps, and ague is in the air. Considerable stretches of the country are poor and sandy and quite unsuitable for agriculture. Yet there are stretches where the soil is rich and capable of growing sugar, cotton, coffee, tobacco and rice. But, alas, some of the most strenuous endeavours to win prosperity from the Territory have resulted in ghastly failure. The dry season is long, and, whilst in the wet season there is plenty of rain, there are seven months of the year when little rain falls. "It is distressing," reported Mr. G. R. McMinn, the Acting Government Resident, "to stand by and see capital and energy literally thrown away." Various companies sought for success, but failure dogged their steps. Here is one report: "Both cane "and maize grew well until the end of January, "when, unfortunately, the crop was eaten down by "large numbers of rats, and within a fortnight of "the time that the maize was fit to gather they took "everything before them."

When good soil is touched, and the drought months are not too prolonged, the fecundity of growth can only be compared to the beanstalk of the story-book of our very early youth. I must

say I received most conflicting reports about the possibilities of the country. On one side it was all glow. On the other side it was all gloom. If I accepted the optimist's illustration, I would lay myself open to a charge from the unfortunate men who have lost money of having some sinister motive to boom a country that was accursed. If I repeated the harrowing stories of failure which lie before me, I am well aware that the optimist would say I was depreciating a country which I had not properly investigated, and that, at any rate, I was not giving a new land a fair chance.

That is always the trouble in Australia. It is the land of extremes. It is the best land in the world and it is the worst land. Whichever line a student of affairs like myself may take up is subject to attack from the other side. Foolish it may be, but it is necessary to steer the middle course, which will, I trust, give outsiders an adequate and fair idea of the position of affairs; but it leaves the writer exposed to bombardment from both pessimists and optimists for either overstating or understating the case. Happily, I have a broad back.

Now, with the plenitude of rain in certain months there is a luxuriance of growth. I honestly believe that, under favourable conditions, there are few parts of the earth where so much rubber, coffee, sugar and cotton could be grown. The mischief is that a sufficiency of rain cannot be depended upon. Thus it comes about that we get such divergent stories about the Territory. A settler is fortunate in his selection and he is fortunate in his climate;

he does well, and those who say it is an unhappy land are called unpleasant names. Other settlers may, however, find equally good land, but the rain is inadequate; ruin comes to them, and they are not hesitating in their declaration that all the rosy reports about the Territory were little short of lies. And when you try to balance the excellences with the deficiencies, and find yourself in a tangle of contradictions, there is one fact which forces you to a particular conclusion, namely, that the white population is decreasing.

That there is a future in tropical agriculture for this lone land I am convinced, especially along the banks of the fine rivers, and, if, as will come in time, a system of irrigation be instituted. This will have to be brought about if a white population in any numbers is to be attracted to the Territory. Also, when more complete surveys have been made, so illimitable is the land that great areas well fitted for the cultivation of tropical products will be found.

But whenever they are found there will always heave up the problem: How can cheap labour be secured so that plantations may be worked at a profit? There, with the existing population pledged to a white Australia, one bumps against a stone wall. There is wealth in the Territory for white men, and for the benefit of the whole of the Australian community. Although I fully concur with the eagerness of the Australian people to keep their continent for white people, I cannot, recognising that so much of the Northern Territory lies within the fierce tropics, see a fitting solution unless a

virtue is made of necessity, and Indian coolie labour is introduced to do that work which the white man is physically unsuited to do, and which, if he could do, would be at a cost making the products of his labour an unmarketable commodity in other parts of the world.

Many Australians with whom I conversed on this matter, and whose point of view I thoroughly appreciated, look to the time when gradually, through generations, a white population would become acclimatised to live under tropical conditions. Well, there is a possibility; but human beings are not so quickly acclimatised, and even were we sure such a thing could happen, it is so far off that it is unwise to nurse that idea at the present time. The mistake that is made is that Australians living in the pleasant zone are disposed to think that conditions which obtain in Melbourne are applicable to the region lying at the back of Palmerston.

There is, however, an immediate future for a vast development of the pastoral industry. Again, I do not ignore the failures there have been in this direction. The failures, however, have not been due to lack of nutriment for cattle, but because the pastoralists have been restricted in their markets. They have had no railway communication to take their goods to the millions in the south, and the steamer service to provide communication with Asia or Europe has not been very good. These things are interdependent; if the Territory began to flourish, there is little doubt that an adequate

steamer service would soon be provided by some enterprising firm. It is quite clear that in the uplands, with an adequacy of rain, there is plenty of food stuff to carry literally millions of horses and cattle and sheep. Yet, with a dwindling population, the Government have to realise that whatever is done must be done quickly, or the Northern Territory will lose whatever good name it possesses, and will be pushed back half a century in comparison with the growth of other parts of the Commonwealth. If coloured labour is not to be introduced, let it be frankly recognised that the Territory is a grazing country.

Australia has to remember that a determined competitor in the very things she produces is advancing by leaps and bounds in the Republic of the Argentine. She will be able to occupy the position which she is legitimately ambitious to hold if she puts sentiment on one side, looks at the facts, and acts upon those alone.

Some Australians with whom I talked thought that the British Government should, at its own expense, but for the benefit of the Empire, transplant some of our surplus population to the Northern Territory instead of allowing them to drift to the United States and to the Argentine. I sincerely hope the British Government will do nothing of the kind. The only men who could be persuaded to go out to the Northern Territory would be those who are unable to hold their own in the great struggle for existence in England, and who have not the means to carry them across the Atlantic.

Such men, in too many cases lacking physical stamina, would be a ghastly failure in the Territory, where the conditions of life are different, and where the climate is also so different from that of the old country.

The South Australians, though they have muddled in places in their administration of the Territory, have, on the whole, done their best. South Australia has not a large population itself, and the drain of expenditure in administering the Territory is more than it can bear. So there is a strong movement toward handing over the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth, with a condition that a transcontinental line is constructed between Port Darwin and the existing line in South Australia which communicates with Adelaide.

Such a line would do much to develop the country. Here comes the objection, put forward by other States, to find money which would not directly benefit them, but which would be a source of advantage to the State of South Australia. The present condition of affairs—544 persons arriving in Port Darwin in 1908 and 747 leaving, the imports decreasing by £10,000 compared with the former year, and the exports decreasing by over £100,000—is not a bright outlook. The sub-collector of customs at Port Darwin, in his report, stated: "The causes of the decrease in imports and exports are general depression, loss of population, and want of energy. There is immediate and pressing necessity for the adoption of some active, intelligent and consistent policy that will have the effect of introducing

population to develop the country's natural resources."

Australians, naturally enough, do not want this Territory to be moribund and to sink to decay. The Territory must be treated as a tropical country. The Australians are as anxious as any people I know to do what is right. They have lofty ideals. They are anxious for all people to have a happy livelihood, and that the distress which marks so many of the older countries should be kept back. Australia cannot get white settlers into the Territory, and she will not have black. It has been costing South Australia £130,000 a year to keep the Territory empty.

A railway is needed. If the electors of Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania refuse to pay for it, as they may well do, then private enterprise should be allowed to come in. It is no good for the mob to criticise the Government and demand, "Why is not something done?" when the only things which could be done are met with resistance at every turn. No garish, over-coloured picture need be presented to the world of the capabilities of the Territory. But we have a right to look to other parts of the earth's surface—Canada, for instance—and see how tracts which, until a comparatively few years ago, were regarded as waste places are now thrilling with well-being. Boldness as well as caution is a good quality in the development of a new country.

## CHAPTER XXV

### SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

"Not understood, we gather false impressions
And hug them closer as the years go by:
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions,
And thus men rise and fall, and live and die,
Not understood."

THOMAS BRACKEN.

I MUST have made indifferent studies of human nature in Australia if I failed to realise that some of the things I have written will rouse resentment in many quarters. I am sorry if it should be so; but it cannot be helped. I have admired honestly and I have criticised freely—the admiration being unstinted, and the criticism with no other intention than to afford what little service I can in pointing out the obstacles which are likely to hamper the progress of the Commonwealth.

Some of my pages I have penned with pain. But I owe a duty to those readers in various parts of the world who are good enough to accept my descriptions as those of a man who at least endeavours to be fair. Openly, and without any hesitation, I can write that, if I were a younger man, and if I had not ties elsewhere, and I knew as much about Australia as I do now, it is the land to which I would willingly go to live: because the

people are so charming, because, in so many places, the climate is so beautiful, and, above all, because Australia is wrestling bravely with mighty problems, local, national and imperial, in which I am wholeheartedly interested.

I have sufficient affection for the Australians and appreciation of their ability to know that, one of these days, they will reach the goal upon which their eyes are so steadily fixed. There are many Australians very pessimistic about their own country. I am an optimist.

Countries, like individuals, have their weak spots as well as their fine attributes. To my mind it shows pettiness of spirit and narrow thinking for any Australian to imagine that he is doing his country good by objecting to attention being directed to any weed in the garden. The amusing thing about it is that, whilst some Australians object to a visitor passing any judgment upon what he sees, they consider themselves perfectly at liberty to pass offensive judgment upon him, and particularly the country from which he comes. Nowhere in the world, in the newspapers of Europe or in the anti-British press in the United States, have I read such gross and offensive language in regard to Britain and British people as I have read in some of the Australian publications. We do not mind; no doubt much of it is true; I hope it does us good.

If I have pointed to some of the smudges on the fair page of Australia's progress, I trust I have done something to remove the ignorance prevailing outside Australia about the land. The lack of know-

ledge, not only in Britain but in the United States and Canada, about Australia, is astonishing. What is believed about Australia is generally wrong. The lamentable impression abroad in the public mind is that the Commonwealth is little other than a bleached and waterless desert. If I have done something to slay that error, this book has not been written in vain.

The difficulty always is to get people, in a distant land, to regard another country from that other country's standpoint. It so happened that one day whilst I was writing the foregoing pages I lunched with a Canadian. He had never been to Australia, and therefore his opinions were free and unfettered. "Why, Australia," he said, "is not in the same street with Canada! It has not the population; it has not the agricultural possibilities; it is nothing but a barren waste, where sheep die from drought." That night I dined with an Australian who had never been to Canada. The conversation turning on the Dominion, he exclaimed: "I cannot imagine why there is so much enthusiasm about Canada, a place which has six months of appalling winter, and where you are likely to die in the snow. Now, Australia——" and so on in the usual vein.

When all is said and done—beyond all the criticisms, all the back-biting, all the provincial jealousies—there is one outstanding fact: Australia is going to be a great nation.

When the population grows and the national spirit develops, what Australia's position will then be in the Empire I do not venture to guess. Some

of the clearest thinkers with whom I talked, loyal Imperialists, told me plainly that when Australia is strong enough she will cut the thread which acts as a sort of painter tying her to the mother country. She will stand alone. Among the proletariat that is the drift of opinion to-day.

It is not the opinion, however, of the other classes of the community. They see, as the people of the United Kingdom should see, that in these days of Federations and of other Powers waxing strong, all parts of the Empire, Australia and Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, Great Britain and the lesser colonies, are all interdependent upon one another. They have the same heritage; they have the same ideals; the same blood flows in their veins. Each will be strong in knowing it has the support of the others; each will be weak if it attempts to stand alone. We are beginning to appreciate that in England. It must also be appreciated in Australia.

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